

MACLEAN'S

THE MARCH TO WAR

Washington and Baghdad talk tough

SEASON OF GRIEF

Remembering the avalanche victims

MONEY MACHINE

Mary Janigan on Manley's budget

KATHLEEN EDWARDS

A brand new 'It' girl for alt-country

SPOILED SPORTS

Filthy-rich players. Fed-up fans. Bankrupt teams.
How low can pro sports go—and can Canadian franchises survive? **BY JAMES DEACON**



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THE UNSPORTING LIFE

In which we see why pro athletes aren't to blame. And we wish Bob Levin well.

SOME OF MY happiest memories involve around time spent as flyline tins and early 20s road-racing minor sports teams. Part of the pleasure rose from love of the game—baseball and hockey—and part from the satisfaction of working with younger kids at a point when you can help shape their lives. We had some talented athletes in our part of Montreal, and some players went on to pro-hockey careers. At the same time, one of the players on another team was Mario Lemieux—who we learned early about real athletic greatness. These days, when I get back to Montreal, I sometimes run into some of these ex-players, now well into adulthood. There's still a bond, and plenty to talk about.

So I don't buy into the belief that professional athletes are all spoiled brats, and I don't believe they're to blame for being overpaid; they simply accept whatever the market pays them. If the high salaries they demand threaten their sport's future, that's no different from CEOs who accept outrageous compensation packages even as their companies suffer huge losses, or union members who won't relinquish expensive perks while their co-player members on bankruptcy, or anyone else who puts their interests ahead of all other considerations.

Athletes aren't much different in their thinking from the rest of us. That, I suppose, is part of the problem plaguing pro sports—the focus of our cover package, written by Sports Editor James Deacon. Sports offers the illusion of equal opportunity: on the field, a level score at the end of games, a level playing field, the same rules for both sides, and a final score that establishes, indisputably, who won and lost.

But a different reality underlies those conditions. A Canadian-based franchise is handicapped by the dollar exchange in competing against American counterparts. And American take a socialist approach to sports: government backs in billions of taxpayer dollars to build stadiums and support franchises, while we focus on that sort of thing. Most

teams are owned by corporations—the bigger, the better by which to suspend each other. So before a game begins, human life geography, population size and backward have determined the likely outcome.

There's an old story to the effect that when a famous athlete was asked why he made so much more money than, say, an accountant, the athlete responded that no one ever bought a ticket to watch someone work as an office. That's true, and it's now a problem: stripped of hype, many franchises resemble giant offices—corporate in agenda, utterly predictable in routine, as employees devoid of joy in what they do. I don't blame athletes who become pained and cynical—but when they feel that way, I'm no more likely to pay to go to their workplace than they are to come to any office.



There is, in fact, a lot less joy around our offices these days. Many readers recall that Toronto's Editor Bob Levin has written so elegantly several times about his battle against cancer. Shortly before

Christmas, Bob received word that the illness has recurred, and he has gone on leave to receive treatment. It's the heart and soul of the place—a fun-talking, smart-mouthed Philadelphia native who tells his best jokes on himself, and he first over every word that goes into Maclean's with the same care that a jeweller handles on a precision. We miss him greatly—his roving taste in old rhymes. 'N blues and all—and can't wait to see him back.

Anthony Wilson-Smith

awilson@maclean.ca or comment on The Editor's Letter

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MAGAZINE'S BEHIND THE SCENES



CHALLENGING THE MARKET

Money, drama, high-stakes, costly pitfalls and big winners. The 2nd annual Stock Market Challenge had it all.

The mock trading challenge at the Design Exchange was co-sponsored by the Toronto Stock Exchange and Junior Achievement of Toronto & York Region, which is the world's largest and fastest growing organization dedicated to educating young people about business, economics and entrepreneurship.

During the Jan. 23 challenge, Toronto-area high school students and corporate teams bought and sold shares in companies on a fictitious stock exchange to build the highest-valued portfolio and accumulate the highest possible net worth prior to the close of trading.

Twenty student teams of four did some hands-on learning, while the 35 corporate teams' entry fees raised \$40,000 to help deliver 10 Personal Economics Investing in Life teaching programs to more than 3,500 Grade Seven students.

This year's winning student team was Toronto's Marc Genssler Collegiate Institute (Daniel Greene, Matt Gortyeva, Vivek Viswanathan, Nicholas Cobham), while Barber Kolenc Inc. (Warren Kolenc, Don Findlay, Rick Barber, Stephen Rice) of Toronto claimed the corporate prize. Seen above is the Highest Percentage of Growth Award team, Bell Canada's The Players Club (from left, Alex Bull, Ashu Awasthi, Carlos Lopez and Joseph Luk with presenter Philip Lieberman, Scotia Capital, far right.)

"The enthusiasm of the students and support of the corporate teams is encouraging," says Gale Carey, president and CEO, Junior Achievement of Toronto & York Region. "Events like this enable Junior Achievement to provide programs that help young people understand Canada's financial industry and public markets." Carey also appreciated Maclean's support as the media sponsor of the Stock Market Challenge.

For more information on Junior Achievement events and programs in your area: 1-800-255-6675, Web site: www.ja.ca/ja.org.

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"Where does the SUV fit here? An SUV if necessary, but only if necessary." —**HOWARD CHODOL, Toronto**



The terrorist connection

John DeMott makes the point about sport utility vehicles in "Big ride, bigger image problems" (Life, Feb. 3). In an effort to tug readers' heartstrings by citing safety, anti-shelter-supporting soccer moms and cross-province-driving family men is almost SUV propaganda. The controversial TV ads linking SUVs to buying gas from Middle East terrorist-supporting countries are not attacking those who drive SUVs with a legitimate purpose, but those who drive them for status, style and prestige. No matter how you slice it, SUVs consume gasoline at astronomical rates, and the more we buy, the more we need to import from these regions to supply SUV consumers. An SUV purchased for any reason aside from absolute need is a sign of an inadequate, self-absorbed personality.

Bob Pradigais, Waterloo, Ont.

While I agree that perhaps it is unfair to draw a line connecting SUV drivers to terrorists, it certainly is worth considering that a North American mentality that encourages us to buy, sell and tolerate these vehicles is exactly the short-sighted, consumption mentality that causes so many countries in the world to resent the United States and Canada. It is that resentment that can, and obviously has, resulted in terrorism. Who truly makes these vehicles such an abomination is that, unlike minivans, they are not targeted at the family market, and they are generally not filled with kids or cargo. People drive them to work, and the fact that they could cut their fuel consumption near-

ly in half by simply buying a carless one is embarrassed/embarrassed that we buy these vehicles, embarrassed that we produce advertisements that glorify them, and embarrassed that we elect governments that allow it to continue.

Michael Baskin, Vancouver

Your article suggests that author Keith Bradsher's description of SUV drivers as "apt to be self-centred and self-absorbed, with little interest in their neighbours and communities" doesn't, at first glance, seem to tie the two SUV drivers whom you profile. However, their arguments for why they drive SUVs seem to support Bradsher's claim. Murali also describes his SUV as "the best way to keep my kids safe," but doesn't realize that by driving such a large, heavy vehicle he is increasing the danger to occupants of vehicles around him in the event of an accident. Margaret Mitchell anyone like the increased visibility, but again this is at the expense of reducing the visibility for vehicles unwise enough to be driving behind her.

Peter Murray, Victoria

Ads placed by the Evangelical Environmental Network in Pennsylvania asked "What would Jesus drive?" It might depend on whether or not he was travelling with the 12 disciples.

Rob Scott, Inverchester, Ont.

I live in the snowbelt of Ontario, so being able to drive any track and feel safe on the road has been an asset. I also coach base ball, so being able to drive myself and up

to seven kids to baseball games certainly helps. Maybe what I should do is buy a two-seat car and have five or six other families all drive their kids to the same game? The efforts of the anti-SUV campaign would be better served protesting more serious causes such as child poverty, but I'm not supposed to be interested in issues other than my own.

Sharon Marshall, Southport, Ont.

Those who buy the biggest, most obnoxious SUVs certainly are saying "I've thought about it and I don't care about the air my children breathe, I don't care about our dependence on foreign oil and I don't care about the other drivers on the road."

Sharon Stiles, Burlington, Ont.

Health-care challenge

Anthony Wilson-Smith is correct in "Mistakes in medicine" (Editor's Letter, Feb. 3) when he writes that the "worst enemies" of public health care are governments. To hear the bio-human response of Ottawa to the Rozsa report is not in any way comforting. Why is it that governments do not appreciate the validity of the research upon which the report is based? Why have the gatekeepers of the health system been so reluctant to embrace more effective models of primary health-care delivery, such as interdisciplinary community health centres? Unfortunately, health authorities in my province of British Columbia are quickly assuming the health care-as-a-business model, with its attendant "cost cuts," "value added," and "cost control" language. As Wilson-Smith warns, when it comes to privileged health care, "Choice... becomes a privilege, not a universal right."

Harriet Perkins, Assistant Professor, University of Victoria School of Nursing

I found Anthony Wilson-Smith's recent comments about the private sector misleading. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is not looking to create a second system of health care, but is asking the government to allow increased private-sector delivery of services within the publicly funded system. The private sector already operates many components of our publicly funded system (e.g., laboratories) and should be allowed to do more. Patients would not be asked to pay additional fees. Canadians would benefit through that increased pro-



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Nancy Hughes Anthony, President and CEO
 Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Ottawa

Leader of the pack

What a delight to be witnessing, amid all the angst and incrimination swirling around the Iraq problem, the spectacle of a leader who might emerge in the Winston Churchill of our time! ("Growing doubts," *Inq.*, Feb. 3). I am not referring to George W. Bush, who, in my opinion, is on the right path, but to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who is emerging grand in the debate. Like Churchill, Blair is prepared to risk the political consequences of his principled stand in support of a U.S. invasion of Iraq. Those of us lucky enough to be citizens of democratic countries should not expect our leaders to be naive poll interpreters and executioners. They should lead, like Blair, even when the direction may be unpopular.

John Goss, *Bevins, Que.*

Suppose the U.S. and U.K. send planes into Iraq on the coming day. What will the pilots be instructed to hunt? Do pyramids, an oval palace, a volcano and what else? How can a pilot find missile launchers if Iraq is on the ground too? As "vicans," whose flag will they raise? Suppose the U.S. and U.K. occupy Iraq for the next five, 10, 20 years. What nation around Iraq would that—would tolerate? And the cost? Suppose the U.S. and U.K. unleash the tribes in and around Iraq who are waiting to kill each other in revenge. Do we really think Iraq was democracy and a chance to vote? Suppose the coming war is being planned by a president and a general manager who think of the long-range consequences—I guess that's really supposition, isn't it?

Billing Cooper, *Prosser, Ala.*

Unheralded, underpaid

As the niece of Robert J. Hampton Gray, mentioned in "Our unknown heroes" (*Mine* bridge on the Record, Jan. 27), I believe Peter Marshbridge is wrong when he says there was a time when "Canada couldn't say enough about its military heroes." For many, many years, very little was mentioned even about Victoria Cross winners, and the names of Gray and Andrew Mykyniuk are still not well known. In fact, Gray has been



A world leader on the right path to Iraq

honoured in Japan in the small town where he was killed as much as he has been in Canada, which is truly astonishing given that he was responsible for the deaths of many people there. In addition, all men and women, including those deceased, were given little pay and few benefits then, as now. Marshbridge appears to be glorifying an era and portraying a reality that did not exist.

Anne George, *West Vancouver*

As a resident in Halifax, I have had the unique experience of working with, and spending time in close quarters with, the modern-day "vicans." Just by being in proximity to these people, an individual gains a wealth of life experience that has been hard won in places like Rwanda and the early days of the Bosnian conflict. Those efforts, as Marshbridge says, should be publicized. But as for the members of special operations Joint Task Force 2, no, they should never have to bear the additional stress of worrying whether or not their actions in far-off places, which happen to be reported by the media, could bring harm to their families. Our culture and way of life are in head-to-head conflict with an other culture that is unconcerned in its choice of targets and knows not the concept of civility.

David Henry, *Halifax*

If the horrendous images of "The High way of death" (Marshbridge on the Record, Feb. 3) made the first Bush administration look as strong as Baghdad, in effect bringing an end to the 1991 Gulf War, could someone please show those pictures to the current Bush administration? Why should we wait for images of awe carriage to bring the government to its senses?

Julie Brooker, *Halifax, N.S.*

Alert to signs of abuse

Unless we improve the ways we protect young people from sexual abuse, we will see more tragedy and more lawsuits like the one Paul Parent has launched against the school board and town of Miramichi, Ont. ("Scandal alerts," *Junior*, Jan. 30). Too many organizations have inadequate or non-existent policies for preventing abuse and handling disclosures. Too few people know how to recognize the signs and react to abuse. Ed Weir is the best defence. As adults, we are all responsible for keeping young people safe. If we don't, our children will continue to grow up and ask why we didn't.

Joel Fairbairn, *National Mission Respect*
 Violence & Abuse Prevention, Canadian Red Cross, Vancouver

What happened to Paul Parent and Joey Kule a beyond words and I commend them for the bravery to come forward and try to get some closure. But when I read your article, it frustrated me because I felt that you portrayed Marshbridge (the community I call home) as backward and inept. I grew up here and although pedophile Bill Springer is a wound that may never heal for some people, he was one resident of Miramichi, and does not represent what this town is.

Paula Kierstead, *Miramichi, Ont.*

Turf wars in the city

Here is an approach that has worked for me in the situation Jane Dowse describes in "Sidewalk rage" (*Overto*, Feb. 3). When I am approached by two or three walk-ins a group where there is little room to manoeuvre, rather than plays game of sidewalk chicken, I just pause. Oncoming walkers must move around me, just as they must dismount any other obstacle.

Jennifer Capeland, *Thornhill, Ont.*

The first rule of sidewalk etiquette is to be aware of your surroundings. By Jane Dowse's own rules, she was the one in the wrong. She said her co-worker was walking too abrupt, and the incoming businessman was slow. The fact that they were "sharing crosswalk" and "didn't notice" is no excuse. When I am walking on the sidewalk and a group (or just a person) refuses to fall into single file, I simply square my shoulders and respond to startled or annoyed looks with a loud "Excuse YOU!" It works like a charm.

Nikolai Goukharov, *Kingston, Ont.*



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Wicho Jucker: Baby-diehard pop star Michael Jackson turns 50. How much is it? The documentary says he has, frankly, earned his money with other people's kids and that he's a mess. Michael Peter Pan. Get the book!

Jack Layton: Not enough the new left leader is elected in Parliament is convinced by the foreign invasion from Russia. He's not doing up his own party booth when Newfoundland New Democrats led a charge for child relief. A former anti-slavery activist with the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Robb Stark: Lately, the world's most powerful party faithful, why would you care about the world's most powerful party faithful? It's a take-it-or-leave-it solution that is not one happy.

Alexis Carter: Captain America gets pushed by the FBI. The FBI types for not giving up the 40 Star starting up to Billie. The FBI types for not giving up the 40 Star starting up to Billie. The FBI types for not giving up the 40 Star starting up to Billie.

Alexis Carter: Captain America gets pushed by the FBI. The FBI types for not giving up the 40 Star starting up to Billie. The FBI types for not giving up the 40 Star starting up to Billie. The FBI types for not giving up the 40 Star starting up to Billie.

Health care: What ails the country's political leadership?

"We will be back." That's how Ontario Premier Tony Evans summed up the Tower of Babel-like conclusion to last week's first ministers' conference. The meeting you supposed to end the incessant bickering between the provinces and Ottawa over the nation's health care system. Instead, it descended into a hold your nose and grab-the-lot white, with no promising victory. Canada's 10 provinces even refused to call the four-daying an agreement, and territorial leaders balked at signing any document, saying Canada's North needs a special deal to accommodate its unique needs.

If there was any consensus, it was that this is a historic day. Last November's royal commission called for a three-year \$15-billion cash infusion—essentially for new provinces like horse care, catastrophic drug coverage, primary care reform and upgraded equipment. Today, the best calculation is that Ottawa will spend \$12 billion in nine anxiety over the next three years.

That's \$3 billion shy of Romeau. The funds will arise up more in years four and five. Their five-year total is nearly \$35 billion, with \$16 billion of that targeted for new provinces. The provinces, however, put Ottawa's total contribution at closer to \$27 billion and say they are getting track once again with costly new programs.

The provinces did agree to the creation of a new Romano-inspired "health council" that would report on—but not compel—how funds are spent. And the new council should alleviate some of the problems of long line-ups for critical and long-term care. But as Romano himself pointed out in November, the \$23.4 billion in additional money earmarked for health care in the last fiscal, in September 2000, has largely disappeared down medicine's sinkhole. Without enforceable rules to ensure "new" money will go to new provinces, the first ministers will undoubtedly be back at the table.

ALAN BELLAMY

Quote of the week: "I respect the intention, but to build character you need a live body."

JOHN KNOX, grandfather of assistant victim Daniel Aron, killed on a high-school adventure outing in B.C.



Design | New York looks up

They would soar even higher, to replace a hurt that was inflicted from the sky. But there is also acute civil caution at their shoulders. The new design symbolizes the Twin Towers' role in the World Trade Center, one of the world's tallest buildings, allow for an office space in their upper reaches. Instead, the struc-



ture thrust upward with the power of symbols—a bridge-like banner of steel in one case; in the other, twin lattice-like cocoons that hover over the airspace of the deconstructed pentacore with as much reverence as technology can muster. Seven firms entered the competition to replace the twin towers from the southern tip of Manhattan Island. Nearly two months, with a winner to be selected later this month.

WORLD

ZIMBABWE In a spectacular treason trial, watched closely by the international community, Montreal-based political analyst and An Ron-McIntyre told a Harare court that he had three conversations with opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai to discuss the "elimination" of controversial president Robert Mugabe. One of the conversations was secretly videotaped, and a heavily edited version made public a year ago made it look like the CIA would remove Mugabe, who was pushing his followers to confront—often violently—white-owned farms. Tsvangirai, a popular figure, has denied the allegations against him. He was arrested just 12 days before the March 2002 election that ended his rule and was released.

WAE TRAIL The U.S. put two disarming ramp guards on alert in the western Pacific to back up its 10,000 troops in South Korea. The move came as North Korea announced that a controversial nuclear facility was up and running. It threatened the U.S. with "total war" if it tried to shut it down.

A linked intelligence report in the U.K. said British troops should be prepared to spend at least three years protecting in

land with supporting the plan by coming out in favor of an approved House in advance of the vote.

WORLD COURT The International Court of Justice has ordered the U.S. to temporarily stop the execution of three Mexican men on death row while it investigates whether they—and 48 other Mexicans also awaiting execution—were granted the right to assistance from their own government. The U.S. is studying the request. It opened a similar order involving a German citizen in 2001.

HEALTH U.S. doctors reported they had found a way to reduce the rate of premature births in women at risk. Weekly injections of the hormone progesterone lowered the risk rate by more than a third.

More over big drug, two new anti-cancer drugs will hit European markets in March to take a major Viagra. The late-life pill that carried US\$1.75 billion last year. Both animals claim to be more potent, with efficacy that can be maintained for 24 hours.

BOATING BABY American grunge singer Courtney Love, arrested by British police after throwing a tantrum on a transatlantic flight, was welcomed to fly home on the same Virgin Atlantic airline after a police officer for Richard Branson as a charity function.

Reclusive pop star Michael Jackson told a British documentary maker that he often sleeps with children at his Nevada ranch but only with their parents' permission and never in a sexual way.

A pay-and-kill billionaire hunt against a former spy who paid US\$1.1 million to a former spy when she readily designated because he was gay.

CANADA

JUSTICE British Columbia expressed outrage at the light sentence handed to two young drug dealers, one of whom lost control of his car on a Vancouver street in November 2000 and killed a 51-year-old woman on a road. Judge Hugh Brown, 21, and Robert Hugh Brown, 23, will lose their licenses for five years and be under house arrest for two, allowed out only for school, work or specific purposes. B.C. Attorney General Geoff Plant called the sentence "inappropriate." The judge said it was

an alternative to overcrowded prisons. A man and a woman accused of shooting an RCMP officer in a garage near Russell, Man., are challenging the law that automatically elevates the killing of a police officer to first-degree murder.

KESTON Just when it was thought safe to go on, a second car crash whacked another New Brunswick, leaving about 60,000 homes and businesses without power, some for the better part of a week. Officials said the 1996 car crash that crippled parts of Quebec and eastern Ontario.

RAIL TRAIL Federal ministers promised new money in the Feb. 11 budget to re-visit the idea of a high-speed train between Quebec City and Windsor, Ont. (The notion was dismissed by Ottawa five years ago in two days.) This would be at least the fourth high-profile outing for that proposal since Montreal's Bombardier formed a consortium to market the European-style trains in 1997.

POLITICS With an election expected soon, Quebec's Parti Québécois government promised working parents a four-day work week, with reduced pay, but full benefits. At the same time, the PQ lost one of its brightest stars. Thursday's board had speeded up and he was leaving politics to spend more time with his young family.

The New Quebecers expelled MP Patricia Vasquez for her contemptuous criticism of Leader

Retrial | The Virk murder

Kelly Ellard, one of two teenagers convicted of beating and drowning 14-year-old Reena Virk in a Victoria garage in 1997, has been granted a new trial. The B.C. Court of Appeal said post-conviction evidence aggressively during the first hearing, three years ago, was her role in Canada's most notorious bullying case. Ellard was part of a group of teenage girls who lured the unpopular Virk to a remote location and attacked her. By pressing her to explain why friends said she was the one who dragged about killing Virk after most of the others had left the scene, prosecutors denied her a presumption of innocence in a particularly heinous case, the court said. Ellard, 21, has been living with her mother in Victoria since October, awaiting appeal. Before that she spent 18 months in a facility for young offenders.

Gilles Duggan. She is the fifth MP to leave the party in the past year.

Long-time Conservative backbencher John Tory, chairman of Rogers Cable, announced plans to seek the Toronto mayoralty in November. Other candidates include former mayor Barbara Hall, councillor David Miller and ex-Liberal MP John Nunziata.

COAST GUARD Ottawa is doubling the size of its 12-member emergency diving team on the West Coast and giving them special training and the authority to enter submerged vessels. The change follows a disaster last summer on the Fraser River where



Coast Guard divers stood by an overturned boat, awaiting military help. The five people trapped in the vessel died.

DATA Regina police received a missing computer hard drive with personal and financial information on approximately a million Canadians. They charged an employee of Regina-based IBM Canada with theft and said it was unlikely the hard drive was used for what's called identity theft, it was actually fraud.

BUSINESS Air Canada missed the specter of large-scale layoffs or wage cuts, and said it may even sell its newly launched Jazz regional airline, which serves 80 cities. In the wake of a \$428-million loss for 2002. President Robert Milton said a full-scale airline is no longer feasible in the present economic climate.

Calgary energy giant EnCana Corp. dumped a 30 per cent stake in the newly syndicated oil sands project for \$3.1 billion. Observers said EnCana's new war chest is being needed for an oil patch buying spree.

HEROISM Canadian intelligence documents reportedly identify a 22-year-old from Scarborough, Ont., Abdulhadi Khadir, as having run an al-Qaeda training camp in eastern Afghanistan. He is still at large but one of his brothers have been captured by U.S. forces. One, 16-year-old Ghani, is the only Canadian in the U.S.-controlled Guantanamo Bay terrorist prison in Cuba.

BY GUY MONTY



Mansbridge on the Record



A MIDDLE EAST DIARY

In Baghdad, gas at three cents a litre—for my SUV, fresh from Baytown, Tex.

I HAD a few hours off on a recent Sunday in Amman, and spent it now walking through the Jordanian overblooked the Jordanian capital. A thirty-something fellow was my guide. He was enthusiastic, funny, and full of the history I wanted to know. Suddenly, a huge U.S. air force cargo plane passed low overhead, and I wondered aloud if it had something to do with the massive military buildup going on in the region. He said "no," and without any hesitation added this explanation: "It comes here every Sunday all across and brings food for the U.S. embassy. They don't like our food."

The remark was made with contempt. Now, I don't know whether it's true—but in any case, it doesn't matter. My Jordanian friend believes it, and so, I assume, do his friends.

Two days in the Middle East won't make an expert out of anyone. But they do allow me to draw on experience in a region that again has the world on edge. My trip took me through Jordan, Kuwait, Israel and Iraq—and left me with a notebook full of observations and anecdotes. Some of them:

■ Two second strike nukes the arrival at Amman airport after evidence of how Iraq has become the parish of the international community. The aircraft haven't moved in 12 years; in fact, they've been sitting there so long they're now almost obsolete. You don't see many Boeing 747s anymore, and you certainly don't see Iraq Airways 747s flying, because they've been grounded since the Gulf War by nations and no-fly zones.

After the airlines that do fly in the region, security is different from what we've come to expect in North America—and if you think that means having, you're wrong. Kuwait Airways, for one, and Royal Jordanian, for another, have drawn the line at those plasticizers that are as much for most airline food. In this part of the world, nuclearized rules in the culinary package—and that includes knives.

■ To those who think any impending con-

lict is all about oil, consider this: gas prices in Kuwait are the equivalent of 17 cents a liter. When I tried to explain what we pay in Canada, a Kuwait Oil Company man said with a smile, "But we don't have any access at the pump." Good point. But when I got to Iraq, I realized the Kuwaitis must be getting ripped off—because Iraqis pay three cents a liter.

That, mind you, seems to be the only deal for Iraqis. Their inflation rate is something something that can be a precursor to regime change. When Saddam Hussein took power in the '70s, the exchange rate was five Iraqi dinars to the U.S. dollar; now, unofficially anyway, it's around 2,250. When Iraqis go shopping, they leave home with shopping bags already in hand; they have to, just to carry the cash.

■ The vehicle I used in Baghdad was a late model General Motors SUV, with more than 300,000 miles on the odometer. It carried the name of the oil company, Iraq, on the back door, and a sticker on the windshield, certifying that it had just passed the TMS Safety Inspection process. A few calls to Iraq explained how it had designed the trade embargo against Iraq, a buyer wanting for a company in Jordan shipped it out dozens of other vehicles there last year. Then, a fly sale to a buyer in Baghdad: simple, clear and maybe even legal.

■ On the day when Iraqi officials met with UN inspectors to say they would comply with new requests, Kuwait's nightly news came late, instead, with news from Iraq, where lunch news had blown up the home of a Palestinian activist. On the day when UN inspectors reported on their findings, Iraq's highest newscast led with news from the West Bank, where Israeli troops had shot three Palestinians.

War may change things in the Middle East. The question is...how?

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Passages

DEO Charlie Biddle moved from Philadelphia to Montreal in 1948, preferring to pursue jazz in a place where white and black musicians shared the stage. The bassist, who played with Thelma Houston and Charlie Parker, kept jazz alive in Montreal in the '50s and '60s, opening his first club in 1958.



He was still playing four nights a week at Biddle's Jazz and Blues until recently, when he became too sick to perform. Biddle, 76, died of cancer at his home.

APRETTED Record producer Phil Spector was taken into custody for suspicion of murder on Feb. 3. After police were called to Spector's Alhambra, Calif., mansion by his driver, they found TV actress Lana Clarkson, 48, dead from a gunshot. In a recent interview, Spector, 62—responsible for the "wall of sound" recordings of the 1960s by such acts as the Ronettes and Righteous Brothers—said he has been taking medication for schizophrenia. He posted \$1.5 million bail and has an arraignment set for March 3.

DEO Canadian football League great Dick Shatto, a native of Springfield, Ohio, played with the Toronto Argonauts for 12 seasons. By the time he retired in 1965 he had scored more touchdowns, caught more passes and gained more offensive yardage than anyone in the history of the league. Shatto, 69, died of cancer at his Florida home.

SUBJECTS Philippe Kirsch, Canada's ambassador to Sweden, will be one of 14 judges to sit on the UN International Criminal Court. Kirsch campaigned for the prosecution of war crimes and, as chairman of the preparatory committee for the ICC, played an important role in drafting the 1998 treaty that established the court.

DEO Born in Kent, England, Ian Herbert Bellairs emigrated to Canada when he was 14, settling in Prince Albert, Sask. At 72, he enlisted in the army and fought several battles in the First World War, including Vimy Ridge. Bellairs, 1915, is a knight of the Order of the Legion of Honour, also received a medal for his capture of a German machine-gun post. He died in Toronto.



Columbia | Renaissance

As the world watched the crew of the Columbia, new questions arose about the mission and safety of the aging U.S. shuttle fleet. By week's end, NASA was testing a new theory of the disaster as the search for debris—and body parts—spread from California to Louisiana. The price of unraveling from that flow of Columbia data is a launch could not have indicated enough data to cause the ship's disintegration on re-entering the atmosphere, NASA said.

That something, perhaps tape debris, perhaps an onboard explosion, provoked the vehicle to go dangerously out of alignment during a critical portion of the descent. The theory: the NASA shuttle, among them, Canadian astronaut Col. Chris Hadfield, who had just arrived in Houston, in part to greet close friend Col. Rick Husband, the last shuttle's commander. Hadfield spoke with Mission's Jonathan Garmoe.

How did you learn about the Columbia? I arrived in Houston very late on the Friday night. I'd been out of the States for a year

and I was in the division of operations for NASA in Russia. On Saturday, I got up late because of the time change. We turned on the TV and the first image we saw was Columbia burning up. It was a shocking realization that seven of my friends had died, that we lost one of our heroes. I had this horrible feeling like I was falling into a pit.

As an astronaut, how do you prepare yourself and your family for the danger? I don't dwell on it. I try to understand the risk as closely as possible because that's life or death for us. It's different for my wife and children. They have to live with the reality of the mission. My kids know their dad has a risky profession. My wife and I have been married for 21 years, and we discussed this possibility years ago. We got life insurance. It's just part of our relationship.

Does a tragedy like this make you re-evaluate your job?

For me, no. If there was a shuttle launching tomorrow, I would confidently get into it. I think we do a tremendous job of providing a safe vehicle to go to space and back. Acci-

dents do happen, but that doesn't mean people are careless. This is part of the business of doing business, and for me the business is still extremely worthwhile.

You've been on two flights. What is it like to come down through the atmosphere? It's actually surprisingly gentle. From a passenger's point of view it's very gradual—it takes more than an hour to come home. You start to feel the effects of gravity again. You look at the magnificent plasma field around the shuttle—it glows all different colours—but you don't have that sensation of the heat outside. It's really only in the last couple of minutes that the air is thick enough for you to start to feel the turbulence. It gets a little warmer in the cabin but you're wearing those heavy pumkin suits and they're hooked up to a life-support device.

It is a slow, sedate process. And I really think the crew of Columbia were only partly used to it. They didn't have any side problems with their vehicle and I think they, as well as the crew on the ground, were taken by heart, quick surprise by the violence of what ended Columbia's life.



HOW SAFE IS THE BACKCOUNTRY?

KEN MACQUEEN talks to two of the heroes in the avalanche tragedy

RICH MARSHALL, back from a therapeutic trek with his wife, Abby Wadkins, sits at the kitchen table of their home in Golden, B.C., attempting to describe the powerful chaos thrust upon them as Feb. 1 by chance, by training and, as they look, by a dirty talley. Marshall, 38, stares into the middle distance, looking perhaps at the mountains beyond his window, but envisioning an avalanche on the north slope of Cheops Mountain, an hour to the east, high in Rogers Pass. They were riding out of a hair-raising canyon of trees when they saw a small, snow-covered ridge of powder and a wall of snow, about a kilometre high and 800 m wide, thundering from long above the cragline. The couple—both experienced guides—looked behind and below and saw the snow bearing down on the long lot of young skiers they had passed about a half-hour earlier. “I yelled ‘avalanche’ three times,” Marshall says. “They actually heard us and looked up and saw the avalanche, just as it was upon them and hit them.”

RCMP say more than seven would have died if not for the actions of Marshall and Wadkins.

The couple learned later the group was made up of three adult supervisors and 14 Grade 10 students from Smith Secondary School, a private school in the Alberta foothills community of Okotoks. It was the second avalanche in two weeks near the B.C. city of Banff, like the first, a party of highly expert and backcountry skiers, a distant ski area. The well-documented fatalities in Alberta, B.C. and the U.S. It once a pull on the communities through-out the Rocky Mountains, where the backcountry is a source of both inspiration and revenue. And it raised disturbing questions about government commitment to backcountry safety.

The B.C. coroner's office, among others, is investigating both accidents, but RCMP in Banff have already reached one conclusion: the second slide would have been

far more disastrous if not for Marshall and Wadkins. “They were very heroic,” says Sgt. Art Kleinowski. “They would never admit it, probably, but that’s the way we view it. Their actions were critical.”

It took a minute for the couple to slide down the avalanche. All but two or three were snowed and, elsewhere, a deadly fog. “Basically we shut down all movement,” says Marshall. “You become a machine that has a job to do.” Wadkins, 33, went to the fog, quickly firing a dashed student. Marshall went to the hand, digging down to reach an instructor. “He had a great look of relief on his face,” says Marshall. The instructor, fortunately, had a satellite phone. Marshall moved on, leaving him to call Parks Canada.

The snow set life concrete. Their boots barely made an impression. They saw their transceiver—standard equipment in slide prone areas—to home in on the distressing chorus of beeps from the avalanche bodies that each member of the well-equipped

group was wearing. A third person, a boy, was found a metre under the snow, blue and unconscious. He gave a huge, reflective gasp as Marshall cleared the snow from his face and chest. “He came to and was totally disoriented and had no idea how long he’d been down,” says Marshall. “He had a lot of fear in his eyes. He relaxed after a few seconds and asked how many people were buried.” Marshall freed the boy’s shovel, and left him to dig out. No time.

By now, the instructor was helping. A shovel broke in the hard snow. Anna grew louder. Three students joined in. “For their age and experience, they did an amazing job,” says Wadkins. “When it comes down to it, they will feel better that they helped than if they sat there and did nothing while their classmates were under snow.”

Hard decisions were made. Some accidents, the transceiver indicated, were buried three metres deep. Move on. “The chances of their surviving are not to count,” says Marshall. “Wherever the shovel breaks, if you can get to them in the first five, 10 or 15 minutes, there’s a chance.” They uncovered bodies of those who, only a few minutes before, were vibrant young people. “The question if they’re dead,” Wadkins said. “There was no time to attempt resuscitation. It’s tragic,” she says. “There’s another five bodies out to find. If they don’t respond without CPR, then that’s it. You have to move on because you might find somebody who will resuscitate on their own.”

Within 45 minutes of the slide, the couple estimate, the first of seven helicopters arrived, carrying more than 30 park workers, emergency personnel, and guides from nearby ski-skiing operations. By then, all that could be done was dig out three or

four bodies. Marshall looks back on the grim task, amazed by one memory of those who did not survive. “They looked peaceful,” he says. “Nobody had a disturbing look on their faces.” It’s not, he adds, “they went to sleep in the snow and didn’t wake up.”

While the avalanche deaths gained international attention, it was in a brutal way all around in Glacier National Park and the surrounding area. Eleven were killed as they awoke in a crush on the winding, narrow stretch of the Banff-Gallop Highway between Johnston Arm, B.C., and Banff, Alta. Park staff only respond to highway tragedies, too, says Pat Dunsen, a communications officer for Parks Canada. “Our park



‘THE WORST SINGLE DAY’

There are reminders of mortality all around Muirhead Harbour. The fishing village in remote northeastern Newfoundland has two cemeteries. Deadman’s Bay is just down the road, and a park a few minutes away is named after Sir Frederick Banting, the co-developer of insulin who died in a plane crash nearby during the Second World War. Still, familiarity has not stopped death of its kind. Not even for someone like 39-year-old Roland Abbott, a former school principal and local historian who has seen the town’s flags lowered to half-mast for someone lost at sea more times than he cares to think about. And flags were lowered again last week for five Muirhead Harbour men who drowned after their boat capsized in the icy water south of Deer Wharfen Island, a traditional destination for winter duck hunting. “It’s the worst single day’s disaster in the town’s history,” says Abbott.

The deaths included the close-knit community of L’Anse-au-collet mourning “every

workday, our coffee and fire, and staff, have seen way too much death this winter.”

In communities like Riverbrook, says Mayor Mark McKee, residents are taking the deaths personally. “These people are guests of the community, the bread and butter of the community,” he says. “It’s like they’ve one of us. It’s the community look who vulnerable we really are.” McKee, like many a mayor by the political response to the tragedy’s multiple tragedies. Liberal MP Hardy Fox, from across Vancouver, argued that the backcountry be closed if there’s considerable avalanche risk. To the mayor, a local backcountryer, the slide is a national example of political ignorance. “Why not

Waiting on Muirhead Harbour’s wharf for the bodies of their loved ones to be found

body knows everybody and if you’re not a relative, you’re a friend,” said Moss-Kane, whose brother-in-law, Robert and Roger Hays, 38, was among the dead. Margaret Faulkner lost three family members. Her son, Brian, 38, managed to swim to the island where he was rescued by passing fishermen. But her husband of 38 years, Irving, 58, and two other sons, Dennis, and Darren, 23, perished. The men were experienced hunters, except for the fifth victim, Draper Foley, 34, for whom it was a first trip out on the Atlantic coast of winter ducks. “The last time I saw him he served me at the lumber supply store,” says Abbott. “I never heard anyone say he died at the funeral home. And now he’s just seen his corpse at the local post.” Local fishermen had helped search and rescue crews recover all the bodies except Barry Faulkner’s, which by week’s end had still not been found.

JAMIE DUNN

close the highway, too, he asks. Riverbrook is surrounded by wilderness. “You can’t just put a barrier up on the backcountry and expect that people are going to stay out.”

Riverbrook, which bills itself as “the Powder Capital of Canada,” depends on public hangar for outdoor winter sports equipment, wilderness skiing or snowmobiling. People drawn to those activities, McKee says, are aware of the risks, and have the necessary equipment and education to mitigate them. “We don’t want to invite people in to visit their lives. Anything we can do to make the backcountry safer, we have to do it.” In his view, that includes more research for avalanche research, as well as turning

one of its deadliest sections of the Trans-Canada into a divided four-lane highway, a mountain engineering feat that he estimates would cost more than \$2 billion.

The provincial government, in the wake of the avalanche deaths, has signalled it may resume funding to the Revelstoke-based Canadian Avalanche Centre. It cost \$440,000 from the centre's budget last year, impeding its ability to publish its highly respected bulletin assessing avalanche risk. Corporate sponsors have enabled the centre to produce three bulletins weekly, but many back-country users say volatile mountain conditions require daily risk assessments.

The risk was rated "considerable" in the area where both avalanches started. That's the midpoint on a five-grabest scale from low to extreme. "There was nothing that day to tell us how deadly it was at that particular area," says Marshall. The students were actually skiing lower on the slopes where the risk was assessed moderate. They were doomed by their sheer speed and reach of the slide, regarded above in the more unstable areas. That was a case in 50- or 60-year-old snow. Says Widdie: "Those are the ones you can't predict." Investigation of the cause continues, but Marshall, who later moved the more fracture line from a helicopter, says it's "obvious" the slide was triggered by wind, not human activity.

The conservationists from the kitchen to their basement Florida. A previous conference in Calgary allowed them an opportunity to meet the families of the students. They're still walking over the tragedy themselves, hoping, on the long, winding drive out on the Trans-Canada, to find the words to help all of the parties. They want some good to come from this disaster, they say. A greater focus on backcountry education, on research, and on the value of good equipment and expertise. Marshall, who grew up in these mountains, has run a steady course of federal and provincial money for avalanche research at the same time conservatively promoting wilderness tourism. "It's ridiculous," he says.

The conversation went back to the rescue. Their actions that awful day weren't acts of heroism, but of responsibility, they say, first by processing the point. It's fortunate they were close and had the skills to make a difference, says Marshall, but in the back-country, "everybody has a responsibility to respond." People, and governments, too. ■



A SEASON OF GRIEF

The loss of seven young lives is keenly felt in Calgary, writes BRIAN BERGMAN

CALGARY DURED ITS DEAD last week. Seven families over four days. Seven 15-year-olds, six boys and one girl, all victims of a mind-blowing avalanche that struck shortly before noon on Feb. 1 on B.C.'s Glacier National Park, where the teenagers had been on a school-sponsored skiing expedition. Seven heartbreaking tributes on lawn level and lives lost—an outpouring of grief, tinged by anger and bitterness, the likes of which the city has rarely, if ever, seen.

The victims—Ben Albert, Daniel Arata, Scott Brookh, Alex Phillips, Michael Shaw, Marissa Staddon and Jeffrey Tishman—were all Grade 10 students from Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School, a private institution set on 60 ha of rolling countryside, about 30 km south of Calgary. It's a school that draws its students heavily, though not exclusively, from the children of the city's corporate and professional elite. But the ripple of grief and anger spread far beyond the privileged STS campus. Conversations at dinner tables and in office corridors returned, again and again, to the details of the tragedy, often among people who had little, or no, connection to the school or its students. It was as if, in a city of nearly one million people, the shock of an act of senseless devastation—that everyone is separated from everyone else by no more than six

A wreath near Rogers Plaza marks the trail leading to the site of the fatal avalanche.

friends or friends—suddenly made sense. I found myself, at times, caught in this vortex. At the five, funeral, that of Daniel Arata at the Rich Tweedsmuir Synagogue, I ended up—in the midst of more than 1,000 mourners—sitting beside an acquaintance of mine, a political scientist. He was there with his son, who was a friend (though not a classmate) of Daniel Barker in the day, his son had told him. "A 13-year-old would not have to attend his friend's funeral."

And therein lies the other factor that drew so many to this particular tragedy. The victims were so impossibly young. After all, they should be about beginning their lives. First heartbeats. First intonations of the freedoms, and burdens, of being an adult. Yet it seems should not be about being swallowed and suffocated by a rising wall of more

'What the world needs is tolerance, wisdom, and I don't think for that you have to go hiking up a mountain'



As a poemist, "I supposed to be detached about these kinds of stories. But I'm also a father of two boys, ages nine and 10. For me, as for so many others, this one hit home."

Take Joanne Whitley, a legal adviser with the Calgary-based Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, and the mother of three daughters, ages 12 to 19. She first heard about the avalanche the morning after it happened, while attending church. Whitley realized she had a friend whose daughter was in Grade 10 at STS. As soon as she could, Whitley made a call, and was relieved to learn her friend's daughter had not been on the trip. But then the rainstorm began. "I've looked at their pictures and you think, 'wow, that could have been my kid,'" says Whitley. "I don't know how those parents are dealing with it. I would go berserk."

Compounding the sense of collective tragedy were the circumstances leading up to the fatal trip. The seven young victims, along with their seven classmates, two teachers and one parental chaperone who survived—had set out on the ski trail even though park authorities told the avalanche risk that day was "considerable." They were also a mere 65 km east of where another avalanche struck just 12 days earlier, killing seven other backcountry skiers. Those facts alone stoked some outrage, and trouble.

The funeral of Daniel Arata was the first for the Calgary teens who died while on a school skiing trip in British Columbia. From left to right: Staddon, Albert, Arata, Brookh, Phillips, Shaw and Tishman.

questions. Why did the trip leaders decide to go on that day? And what were they, and the kids, doing there in the first place?

It is hoped those questions, and many others, will be answered by the separate investigations being undertaken by the school, the RCMP and Parks Canada authorities. As well, the B.C. coroner's office will order an inquiry or full public inquiry in the coming weeks. The questions may also figure prominently in lawsuits that could well follow down the road.

Last week, amid the tears and eloquent eulogies, the families of the victims were already grappling with those issues—and coming to very different conclusions. Speaking to more than 1,500 mourners assembled at Anglican Christ Church for the funeral of their younger brother Michael, Aranda Shaw granted the outdoor education program at STS and the professionalism of the staff who ran it. Aranda, 17, had gone through the same course and participated in a similar back-country trip. "I know many people are asking why seven beautiful kids were taken

from all of us so suddenly," she said. "This is just a tragic coincidence that nobody could have prepared for, nobody could have predicted and nobody could have stopped."

Her just-16-year-old brother, Daniel Arata's grandfather, John Koring, stood at the front of the synagogue and delivered a soft-spoken, but blunt, assessment of how the school had failed its students. "What matters me," began Koring. "Is that this tragedy didn't have to happen." There was a collective in take of breath as he went on to say that he understood the six expedition members were designed to be character-building. "I respect the intention," Koring said. "But to hold character, you need a live body. What kind of character are we trying to build with this kind of adventure? Random? Consequence? I think what the world needs is tolerance, compassion, wisdom, and I don't think for that you have to go hiking up a mountain."

Stunned with grief, Koring almost seemed taken back by his own words. "Forgive me, as a bereaved grandfather, for expressing these thoughts," he concluded. "But I think these things have to be rethought."

Despite words that left some mouths, the debate over the wisdom—or folly—of taking those kids onto the mountain that particular day rightly took a back seat last week to a celebration of the students' lives. And what is a memorial gift and an accomplished group of teenagers who appear to have been. These were kids, the scrappy hockey player who, according to his family friend, "always played a half-foot above his five-foot six frame." Daniel, a grungy, head-overboard, rock climber and, of all things, ancient Socrates. The one urban athlete and trumpet player. Alex, an aspiring actor. Michael, an avid skier. Michael, a nationally ranked figure skater. Jeffrey, a budding pop musician and basketball player. Or. All of them, by all accounts, high-achieving and creative.

Of the many moving things said last week, the one that will stay with me the longest is an observation by Daniel's father, Peter Arata. He talked about the myriad ways parents try to protect their children, from checking their hands as they take their first baby steps to holding on tightly as they negotiate that first bicycle ride. "But then one woke up one day," he said, "and find all our mistakes from have been minimized." For the recent families, that's the essential tragedy. For the rest of us, it's a reminder, perhaps, of how much we take for granted. ■



MANLEY'S MONEY MACHINE

MARY JANIGAN reveals the finance minister's budget plans

JOHN MANLEY has always accurately invoked the image of Canada as a powerful Northern Tiger in a tiger-on-tiger world. So it is perhaps natural that his advisers want the finance minister's Feb. 18 budget to earn him some of the tiger of the Liberal leadership race. Federal budgets, after all, are always about far more than numbers; they divulge aspirations. And there is now enough money in Ottawa's coffers for Manley to know a coherent, alluring vision for the knowledge economy—and for the steady-eyed delegates to the November leadership convention, if it will be his first budget since he took over the portfolio from leadership rival Paul Martin on June 2. And it is his big chance. “He has to set out the new agenda of innovation and competitiveness,” says a leadership campaign insider, “following on the Martin agenda of fiscal responsibility.”

It will be a delicate balancing act. Manley must be true to his own self—but also brand-on his appeal to the left of the party. With his emphasis on fragility and productivity, the minister has always appeared in the right of many colleagues. But the budget speech will proclaim that Canada's economy is strong—because its social programs produce educated, healthy workers who live in safe communities. Then Manley will outline unimproved programs for cities, immigrant integration, health, the environment, post-secondary education and children. In effect, Manley will say the left wing of the party built social programs for compassionate reason—but those programs also fuel the nation's competitive drive. “He is going to address the big weakness people think he has: that he does not understand the left,” says an insider. “He is going to be able to say to the left, ‘I cannot only appeal to you. I can legitimize your agenda.’”

There will be anodes, equally powerful, those in the budget. Transparency Ottawa has never forgiven the previous for using chunks of \$10 billion medical equipment fund to buy such things as lawn mowers and ice machines. That fund, in turn, was part of a \$23.4-billion, six-year health package that

was introduced in 2000—and that has had to be dropped. So Ottawa now demands full accountability for new health spending of what it counts as \$24.8 billion over five years. As well, Manley will propose that Ottawa start to spell out how its lump-sum payment to the provinces for health, post-secondary education and welfare—the Canada Health and Social Transfer—is divided. (It was \$19 billion in 2002-2003.) He may even suggest that, at a future date, Ottawa could create separate transfer for each need. “People are entitled to know how their dollars move through our decentralized system,” says Michael Dexter, chairman of the Canadian Institute for Health Information. “They want to know if they are getting lower placements or lower money for their money.”

And there is plenty of money. Last October, Manley proudly announced that, after setting aside \$3 billion for contingency funding and a provision, the 2003-2004 surplus would be about \$1 billion. That expected surplus is now at least \$3 billion. And, even after contingency deductions, the minister is looking at a total surplus of roughly \$55 billion over the next five years. Revenues are higher than expected. Public debt charges have been lower. Even after last week's health deal, Manley can still fund his other initiatives. “They have been extraordinarily prudent in their forecasts,” says Toronto-Dominion Bank chief economist Don Drummond. “The money makes a huge difference. The minister can accommodate the health care juggernaut—and do something a little more laudable.”

So what will Manley do? Although the budget is not yet finalized, Manley's has learned some likely highlights.

There's enough surplus to unveil an alluring vision for the knowledge economy—and for Liberal leadership delegates

■ He will continue the tradition of paying the contingency and provision funds toward the \$538-billion debt. But that is all—because the debt is shrinking as a percentage of GDP. (It has fallen from a peak of 79.9 per cent of the size of the economy in 1995-1996 to 49 per cent in 2001-2002—and is expected to drop close to 40 per cent in 2003-2004.)

■ The maximum Canada Child Tax Benefit will rise in July from \$2,444 for the first child in anywhere from \$2,600 to \$2,800. And Manley will likely lay out a timetable for future increases. Ken Battle, president of the Canadian Institute of Social Policy, estimates that families on welfare will start to get extra cash when the federal benefit exceeds roughly \$2,600, which is the average provincial welfare payment per child. Because of the benefit, more provinces cut back welfare benefits for children under 18 with Ottawa that less than divert the money to such things as subsidised daycare. “If Ottawa keeps growing its benefit over the decade,” Battle says, “it will be creating a new generation of income security programs for the 21st century.”

■ By all accounts, Manley laudates the word “divorce”—because he wants to emphasize the importance of early childhood education. So there will likely be an engaged crowd in the familiar gayling line to send their children to immersion schools in nursery schools. He will also put more money into post-secondary education scholarships.

■ The 2001 federal budget act added an extra \$2 billion for strategic infrastructure—two thirds of which has not been touched. Manley may specify that part. And he will step aside that cities are eligible for public transit funding if they have urban plans that limit sprawl. In effect, the minister wants a “green spin”: funds will be directed from highway development to public transit.

■ The minister is considering the creation of the schedule of personal and corporate tax reductions beyond 2004, in 2006. He will raise the \$14,500 limit for RRSP contributions in 2003. (It is already slated to

rise to \$15,500 next year.) He will also eliminate the Large Corporations Tax, which raises \$1.4 billion—and which is imposed on a corporation's taxable capital, costing \$15 million. “It's a negative tax,” says Jack Matus, president of the C.D. Howe Inst. “It has only businesses harder—and those that have a long lag between the investment and actually earning income.”

■ Manley will end the “EI surplus” fiction. In theory, there is a surplus in the Employment Insurance Fund of \$40 billion as of March 31, 2002. But EI premiums actually go into general revenues. Manley will partially raise that Ottawa paid down \$46.7 billion in debt by that same date. Then he will finally admit the EI surplus does not exist. He is starting the process of lowering EI premiums to match the real fund requirements.

■ There will be at least \$1 billion in new money for defence—including \$500 million or more in 2003-2004. There will be promises to improve equipment and training.

■ Ottawa wants to bring skilled workers to less populated areas on visitors' visas, granting landed status if those workers remain in place for three to five years. The budget may propose signing contracts with post-secondary institutions, especially those in more remote regions. To attract immigrant migration, those areas would offer language training—and em are now assessment Canadian standards in such areas as medicine and engineering. (Ottawa may also construct some of its own immigrant training schools.)

■ Manley will bring back “program review” or, as there will be a constant process of reviewing all federal spending to see if it is still required.

“We are planning for Canada in a world shaped by globalization, science, technology, the international movement of people and lifelong learning,” Manley told Alberta Liberals earlier this month. For Canadians, the budget brings solid and innovative proposals. For the minister, there may be the smell of which leadership dreams are made. ■





WASHINGTON'S MARCH TO WAR

The Bush administration's message to countries wary of conflict: get out of the way or we'll run you over. JONATHAN GATEHOUSE reports.

"DEMOCRATS LOVE the UN," a former member of the National Security Council told me recently. "But it's Republicans that make it work." What was left unsaid is who exactly the Grand Old Party makes it work for: Americans. The verdict may still be out on Colin Powell's performance before the Security Council in New York last week. Those who were already inclined to believe that Iraq poses a threat found his litany of phony intercepts, grainy satellite photos and tough talk convincing, while the skeptics remain skeptical. But there was no mistaking his underlying message to the other nations seated around the table: Get out of our way or we'll run you over.

Powell himself put it only slightly more diplomatically: "This body places itself in danger of intolerance if it allows Iraq to continue to defy us without responding effectively and immediately," warned the U.S. secretary of state, formerly considered the Bush administration's foremost dove. "The issue before us is not how much time we are willing to give the inspectors to be frustrated by Iraqi obstruction, but how much longer we are willing to put up with Iraq's non-compliance before we as a council, we as the United Nations say, enough, enough."

Jack Straw, the British foreign minister, whose boss, Tony Blair, has enthusiastically adopted the role of Charlie McCarthy to George W. Bush's Edger Bergen, seconded the motion: "Saddam is denying every one of us, every nation here represented. He questions our resolve, and is gambling that we will lose our nerve rather than enforce our will." Invoking the memory of the League of Nations—the UN's ineffective predecessor—Straw suggested Hitler and Saddam have more in common than coincidences: "We owe it to our history as well as our future not to make the same mistake again."

I've always subscribed to the theory that when someone starts throwing around comparisons to the leader of the Third Reich, the rational portion of the argument is pretty much over. And watching the U.S. news networks give short shrift to the responses of the other members of the Security Council ("We'll just take a quick commercial break while Franco Xavier Gashyova, Casanova's minister of external relations, argues for beefed up inspectors..."), one could almost feel the saw machine picking up speed.

In the diplomatic bushes began to feel David Cameron, director at Carlson University's Centre for Security and Defence Studies, says the jockeying for position in a post-Saddam world is already under way. "Iraq is clearly a state that has failed," he says. "It's just a matter of time until it disintegrates, either because of outside intervention or internal pressures."

Everyone involved would still prefer to score an easy victory, forcing Saddam to abandon power through "good old-fashioned cooperative diplomacy," says Cameron. But when push comes to shove in the next couple of weeks, the UN will be facing a rather stark choice. The Security Council could back away from its own demand that Iraq disarm or face the consequences, but it runs the risk of never being consulted about anything important ever again.

The most likely scenario, says Cameron, now appears to be a second resolution setting a firm deadline for Saddam after Hans Blix, chief weapons inspector, makes his next report on Feb. 14. The U.S. gets the stamp of approval a second time warned all-outside Canada on board. Consideration of options like France and Germany get a weaker deal when it comes to the lucrative reconstruction of Iraq and its oil fields. The 180-plus big players who make up the rest of the UN assess their place on the world stage, and their ally picks a team in New York.

Iran's "coalition of the willing" is already falling into line. In Turkey, the parliament has given its permission for the U.S. to upgrade its military bases and ports there for possible use in a conflict with Iraq, providing the Pentagon with the desired option of barring Saddam from both the north and Kuwait in the south. Most U.S. and British troops arrive in the Gulf region by the day—150,000 will be in place by Feb. 15, the minimum number military planners say are needed for action. Two more aircraft carriers were ordered to the region last week, to join the four already in place.

The New York Times and the Washington Post have both quoted anonymous military sources who suggest the war will begin with an unparalleled 48-hour bombardment of Iraq with some 3,000 cruise missiles and laser-guided bombs. Special forces, airborne troops and marines will then simultaneously hit dozens of key strategic points deep

The President's "coalition of the willing" appears to be falling into the U.S. line.

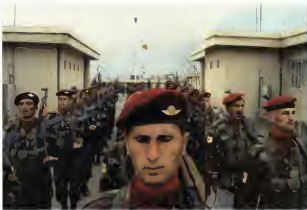
inside the country, hoping to force a quick surrender of the Iraqi military.

Although a war could come as soon as the end of the month, Michael Peters, director of research and executive vice-president of the Council on Foreign Relations, a New York think-tank, says U.S. forces could also easily wait until March or even April. "There's been a lot made of the desert heat, but it would be miserable and hot for both sides," notes Peters, a former battalion commander during the U.S. invasion of Panama and Operation Desert Shield. "In my estimation the biggest determinant is going to be the lengthening days, because the biggest U.S. advantage is their night-fighting capability." Peters says he expects the battle to be "furious, but short." "The 1991 Gulf War took six weeks," he says. "This certainly isn't going to take that long."

What has been lost at the dinner of war preparations and diplomatic arm-twisting have been the voices of a skeptical world public. Opinion polls continue to sound a dissonant note: opposition to a "pre-emptive war." While critics of the U.S., Canada and the European Union may eventually rally around the UN flag, it might be too much to expect the Arab world to applaud Israeli troops rolling down Baghdad. Tariq Jassal, an expert on Middle Eastern politics at the University of Calgary, is convinced that the U.S. dream of a democratized Iraq will turn into a nightmare. "This war will bring more terrorism that we have ever seen," he says. "We're not the whole thing as 'threat versus us' and we've identified 'them' as Islamic civilization." There is already a growing rift between Arab rulers and the people they govern. Jassal notes that 40 per cent of the Arab population is under the age of 16—an angry, impressionable demographic. "These people are going to bring in anti-American guns won't have any credibility," he says. "Because we've created a vacuum in the region except for the religious extremists."

With so little seemingly left to determine except the start date of the conflict, it's a problem Bush might want to turn his mind to. Just like his father in 1990, he appears to be in a position to force the UN to bend to his will. But if past history is any indication, even one massive military victory was fought with peril. What works in the short run for Bush and his army may not end up being quite so successful for the rest of us.

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THE ENEMY TO THE NORTH

During his many trips into Iraq, Michael Scott Taylor has become accustomed to dealing with the country's nervous security forces. Last week, when he failed to get permission to travel into the Kurdish-controlled regions of the north, he simply stood out on his own without interpreter. They managed to talk their way through a border checkpoint, and spent time with Kurdish militia units, but getting back into Iraq was rather difficult. As Taylor stood across the border, three Iraqi soldiers pointed their rifles at him. The chilling sound of bullets being chambered stopped him cold.

"They gave the order to shoot," yelled his guide. After several seconds as Iraqi officers appeared, "Safe!" Canadian journalist Taylor asked, and after what seemed like an eternity the officer told him, "You have armed my troops. Plus my dinner is getting cold, so I will allow you passage." Taylor later filed the following story:

THE SOLDIERS SCRAMBLED out of their cement bunker, and after hastily donning helmets, they loaded their Kalashnikov assault rifles and took up firing positions in a trench carved into the barren earth. A young guard on order, and two of the young Iraqi

The Kurds are ready to help an invading American army, SCOTT TAYLOR reports

paratroopers pulled a light vehicle barrier across the road-way. Four hundred metres away, across a five-lane bridge spanning a marshy flood plain, members of the Kurdish militia, many dressed in traditional baggy pantslacks and checkered head scarves, also rushed to secure the border. The drill is repeated at dusk every day when the boundary between Iraq and the Kurdish-held north is closed, 350 km northwest of Baghdad, on a heavily stretch of highway linking the cities of Mosul and Kirkuk.

Kurdish forces on patrol in Salahaddin, home of the Kurdistan Democratic Party

With war in Iraq looming, the tension between Saddam Hussein's forces and the Kurds is intensifying. If the U.S. invades, it is widely believed the Kurds will assist American forces advancing from the north. The Kurdistan parliament buildings are located in Irbil, 25 km from the border separating the rocky plateau known as the Sulaymaniyah Massif. This is the mountain stronghold of Massoud Barzani, the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party. Barzani and his KDP fighters are the sole power in the Dohuk and Irbil provinces of northeast Iraq, and in anticipation of the looming invasion, the KDP has constructed a brand new public relations office at its headquarters in the nearby town of Sulaymaniyah. "We are anticipating a flood of Western journalists to arrive here in the coming weeks," explained Momen Marbani, the KDP's official spokesman. "We provide access to the Internet, telephones, radio—anything they like."

As for the role the KDP will play in the event of war, Marbani told *Maclean's* that no commitment has yet been made. "Our position of autonomy in the United States depends entirely upon the guarantee that we receive," he said. "Barzani is willing to combat his forces to assist Saddam, but we have very bitter memories of U.S. betrayal. The Americans sold out the Kurds in the 1975 Algiers agreement [which ended an Iraqi border dispute] and in 1991 they abandoned our support following the Gulf War as well."

A major strategic consideration in the north for any post-Saddam Iraq is the issue of an independent Kurdistan. Barzani has complete autonomy in the provinces he controls, while most Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani and his Patriotic Union of Kurdistan party control the province of Sulaymaniyah. "We fly our own flag and patrol our own border perimeter. But ultimately we are still Iraqi citizens," said Marbani. "We fight to someday unify Iraq, but under a form of federalism which protects us from discrimination and oppression."

While Barzani's KDP is regarded as moderate, Talabani and his PUJ are considered to be militant nationalists, openly advocating independence. Neighboring Syria, Iran and especially Turkey—wary of U.S. ally in this crisis—are concerned that an independent state for Iraq's 3.5 million Kurds would only



increase the separatist movement among their own sizable Kurdish minorities. Already, pro-Kurdish rebels in these neighbouring countries have begun to use the autonomous northern Iraq province as support bases for their operations.

In newly constructed military barracks in Sulaymaniyah, large numbers of recruits in Barzani's militia are undergoing basic training, many dressed in U.S. combat clothing. Although they possess few heavy weapons or armoured vehicles, they are equipped with new assault rifles and light machine guns. "Our army is not very powerful in the sense of weaponry, but we have skill and experience in guerrillas," said Marbani. "If we do assist the Americans, it will not be only as guides and translators. We will fight to liberate the people of Iraq from Saddam Hussein."

Prior to joining the Kurdish cause, Barzani, 76-year-old Ghanim Haja fought as a soldier in the Iraqi army. "In 1991 during the Kurdish rebellion, I was a conscript in Saddam's forces," Haja said. "When we were sent into the lines my Kurdish comrades and I took the first opportunity to discard our uniforms and switch sides." Asked to predict the possibility of a U.S.-led intervention into Iraq, Haja was surprised by the question. "It's 100 per cent that the Americans will proceed—in March."

Between Irbil and the Iraqi-controlled border, Kurdish militia are hastily widening the highway to four lanes. "The Americans can move quickly into Iraq," Haja explained. Although officially the KDP maintains there are no U.S. soldiers on Kurdish-controlled land, Barzani confirmed their presence. But, he said, "I am not here and tell you that, officially, this is not true."

Despite the enthusiasm of Kurds being asked



during a rebellion in 1968—the Kurds' population remains divided of Iraqi reprisals, largely because they live within the no-fly zone which covers the northern reaches of Iraq. "Saddam's troops are too respectful of American air power to risk attacking us," said Mithdan. "The only thing we fear is that Saddam would unleash a chemical attack on us in a final do-or-die scenario."

In anticipation of a joint American-Kurdish offensive from the north, Saddam's forces have already deployed into front-line trenches. As a makeshift bunker outside of Mosul, 36-year-old paramilitary Azzam Ibrahim manned a twin 23-mm machine cannon. Proud of his mission brief and 22 years of loyal service to Saddam, Ibrahim explained with a grin toothed smile that he is still a private because of his fondness for risk, a strong alcoholic drink. Then, putting the benefits of his mission, Ibrahim said, "These are useless against American weapons. But if the Kurds attack us on the ground, we will slaughter them with these guns."

Smothering back several kilometers from

Some Kurds fight for independence, while others would settle for autonomy

the Kurdish boundary line, Iraqi artillery pieces are dug-in, along with some of the few remaining tanks and armoured vehicles left in Saddam's arsenal. These defenses—including batteries of air defence missiles—are centred on the strategic roads to Kirkuk. Outside this ancient city is the crown jewel of the region—the Baba Gurgur oil fields, the oldest and richest deposits in northern Iraq. They would ensure economic independence for whatever faction gained control of them. With no oil reserves inside their present territory, both Barzani and Talabani are eager to wrest control of Kirkuk from Saddam's forces.

Added to this equation are the aspirations of the local Turkmen population, living along Iraq's western border with Syria. Estimated to number nearly two million, these descendants of ancient Turkey are second only to the Kurds as a minority in Iraq. Split between Kurdish controlled Halab and Sad-

dam-held Kirkuk, the loyalty of the Turkmen will be a major factor in the event of a U.S. attack. "Under both the Kurds and the Baghdad regime, the Turkmen presently have no civil rights," explained Masud Ziya, a member of the Turkmen Front, a political party with a hardline nationalist platform. Originally from Kirkuk, Ziya fled to Iran after the Kurdish rebellion of 1990. "I thought that things would be better under the Kurds but nothing changed."

Independence of Barzani's KDP, the Turkmen Front is working in conjunction with the U.S. to assist in the war effort. This group has already supplied nearly 400 volunteers to the CIA-sponsored Iraqi opposition army that is currently undergoing military training at a NATO base in Hungary. "I wanted to volunteer to fight, but I did not have any prior service in the army," said Ziya. "If we help the Americans by fighting Saddam, the Turkmen will be rewarded with increased autonomy—and some of Kirkuk's oil rights."

Another faction to be considered in a potential conflict are the Yezidis, numbering

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as many as one million. Following a religion that predates Christianity, the Yazidis have earned in the remote foothills of northern Iraq for centuries. Most Iraqis believe the Yazidis are insane. But the Yazidis bristle at the term "devil worshippers," a misconception they say is used by their Muslim and Christian countrymen to mock their religion. "We only worship one God—our creator," explained Khalid, the Yazidi temple servant in the village of Bachama.

Members of this ancient, reflexive sect have proven in the past to be fiercely loyal to Saddam. Yaqdi remains proudly loyal to serve in the ranks of the Iraqi army during the war with Iran, and again in the Gulf War. At the height of that conflict, when the Americans bombed and threatened all communications, the Iraqi army relied upon its Yaqdi soldiers to transmit unavailing messages. "In 1991, when the Kurds began their uprising, we fought them in the hills near Erbil," says Yaqdi. "I saw Yusef al-Husseini in Baghdad," said Yusef Jalil Hussein, a 24-year-old Iraqi medical student and local leader of Saddam's Baath party. "When the Iraqi army withdrew in the face of Russian troops, the Yaqdi stayed and defended their own homes."

Turkic loyalty has not gone unrewarded by Saddam. "We are proud to include Turkic senior commanders in the army, including one general," Hameed said. "And our people hold many top offices within the Baath party. Under the rule of Saddam, we see no reason to give up our religion and customs—without fear of persecution."

With U.S. special forces already believed to be on the ground near Bushdip in the Kandahar-northernmost, the Yezdi is determined to resist all attacks. "We are not afraid," Hassan declared. "We look forward to U.S. troops trying to occupy our homes. The Americans will learn the same lessons taught the Kurds: the Yezdi will fight." Others hope that it will not come to war, although members of Bushdip's Christian and Yezdi Muslim minorities. "We have lived in harmony in neighborhoods to the Yezdi all of our lives," said Marnon Wade, a 36-year-old Catholic. "They talk bravely about defending their land, but for the sake of my three children, I only pray that the war will not happen." With both sides doing it for free, it is unlikely that Wade's prayers will be answered.

Scott Taylor is publisher of Ottawa-based *Expat in Costa Rica*.

BRAVADO IN BAGHDAD

Behind the bluster and the TV propaganda, Saddam appears to be methodically preparing for an attack, writes DON MURRAY

THESE ARE THE PREPARATIONS for 1994:

In the centre of Baghdad a new village has sprung up. Like some latter-day migratory tribe of carnival-foodies, the television networks of the world have converged on the roof-tops: Ministry of Information. The tribe has brought its tools—satellite dishes and lights and cameras to record reporters sending messages of daily inquiries, daily insults and cheering glores.

Germany have. A month ago there was just an outpost. There were perhaps eight firms and curvy structures. Now there are 47.

Below mall the hazy, working in minutes in this smoky space, and the midway, begging for their own. All brisk step around workers and over pits of trash and manure, forming a substantial source of profit before Armageddon, the runway is busily building more cubicles. The press creates a busy lifeless for its services, roughly \$250 a day per person simply to have the right to smoke, and miserable old cubicles. The "services" include promises of news conferences or meetings with senior officials. Many of these simply want to be stroke of a pen. The services also include a service of a "conspiracy" to be exposed on a television. Baghdad is a city of 4.8 million people. That's to the millions of the world would only give a limited glimpse of this industry. In their presence Iraqi completely breaks the agreed line - we are not used. We will fight for our country and our leaders who does, America represent us?

There are not enough minders. Having one is a condition of doing business; journalists fight for them. Minders get richer. Yet some own as the dollars fill their pockets, warmselves. "I was a firm owner before this," one said. "I put out and watched foreign firms. Then I took out the sea and violence." H

did more, he began re-editing films before they were released. He became a ghost director. "I improved the stories." As for his preferences: "I love John Wayne, he is my dream. I have lots of videos of his films."

There were 250 journalists in Baghdad accredited to the Ministry of Information at the beginning of February. Almost 4,000 more were asking for visas. "You want to stay with us?" one ministry official asked rhetorically. "You want to die with us?"

And pay for the privilege? That was the
vacation left unspoken.

Saddam Hussein also watches videos. Among his favourites is said to be *The Godfather*. He will be 66 in April. Former associates, now in exile, say he has a bad back. He longs, it seems, for exercise in his palace, often when the rain is at 3 a.m. He hasn't been seen in public for years.

But he is seen nightly now on Iraqi TV. He wears a three-piece suit, often smokes a Cuban cigar, and chairs meetings of the commanders, almost always in a different room in a different palace. His younger son Qasbi is usually in the picture. Qasbi commands the Special Republican Guards, the elite force that is expected to be Saddam's last line of defence.

Each evening Sedláček makes his entrance at the top of the nine o'clock news. The reports resemble those seen on Soviet and Chinese television in the 1970s and 1980s. The goal is not to inform but to sanctify the leader in charge. His authority is unchallenged. "I demonstrate that, generally, up to their throat when he errs, some share that they are ready to sacrifice themselves for the Anointed One, Glorious Leader, Direct Descendant of the Prophet, President of Iran, Chairman of the Revolutionaries Com-



Kashtan has studied Stoker's methods, outlining the lessons learned in modeling

Grand Council, Field Marshal of the Armies, Doctor of Laws, Great Uncle of all Iraq's peoples—to give him some of his titles.

Saddam responds graciously that it must not be forgotten that the leader is a great commander! These missiles are an opportunity for the public, and Saddam's interests, to witness his grasp of strategy. "The enemy is not going to try to penetrate the suburbs of Baghdad because he knows he is going to die. The enemy depends on electronic precision, on long distance shelling and aerial bombing. If we minimize his efficiency in those areas, he will appear as a grain of sand on the battlefield."

There is brocade, some soft plaid, and "if they come, we are ready. We will fight them in the streets, from the rooftops, from house to house. We will never surrender." Winston Churchill would have been, let us say, intrigued by the new context in which his words find themselves.

There is also historical allusion. Saddam has promised that the new Mongol hordes will be crushed at the gates of Baghdad. This is not the most felicitous parallel. The old Mongol hordes in 1258 were not crushed, but rather swept into Baghdad. Their as-

marked the end of the caliphate, the legal centre of Islam and symbol of its unity at the time. The caliph pleaded for mercy. He was put to death. The Mongols left a monument, as a reminder of their passing, in Tikit, near Saddam's home village. The monument was a huge pile of skulls.

Saddam is a methodical man. He studied Stalin in his youth, like the Soviet dictator he rose to power by becoming the spider at the heart of his party. He became the head of the Baath party security service, and used this position to bribe and blackmail his

He became, effectively, second in command — like Stalin with Lenin, he controlled the security service that surrounded the president and sealed him off. In 1979, he became the president himself. Like Stalin, he pursued the country with portraits of himself. The cult of personality blossoms lushly in Iran.

He has built a multifarious political vehicle to which he alone has the key. There are overlapping internal security services that watch the population, the party and each other. There is the army and then there are the Republican Guard and finally the Special Republican Guard. Running each of these organisations are men from his milieu or, in some, like Deputy Prime Minister Tsing Aste, who are entirely dependent on Sudduth. There is, rumour, being in their midst colleagues. One Iraqi analyst outside the country estimates they are 150,000 to 400,000 in number. He calls them the "coalman of Gaule". Many have moved on their hands and knees to escape the Iraqi army and a restore population that has, in places, risen above before they fight. They will, however, not

Saddam has learned from his mistakes. The centralized command structure from the Gulf War, which soured up when US air strikes disrupted communications, has been abandoned. There are three regional commands, in the north, the south and around Baghdad. The regional commanders will apparently have much autonomy. The key is the centre. The levee Baghdad.

"People say to me, the frogs are not the Vietnamese, you have no jungles and swamps to hide in." This was one Iraqi official, speaking in the fall. "Let our streets be our jungles, let our buildings be our swamps."

"The Alamo will be lighting phones. They will find a very hard to know where the money is. Those who are betting the Saddam will be defeated quickly are mistaken." This is the judgment of Gen. Tufail al-Nasiri. He took part in a 1991 uprising against Saddam and now heads a council of retired officers. "Ten of thousands of elite Iraqi forces have spent underground, above ground, in homes, schools, mosques. They are not in camps or major installations. These units are prepared for life we live and have the economy for it," al-Nasiri told.

Now the regime wins. The U.S. has made its push to the Security Council. George W. Bush says he is impatient. Conflict appears to be coming. Saddam may be holding a losing hand but has recourse to the Americans as the savior as that voiced by the press from the Ministry of Information: do you want to die with us?

Don Murray is the senior European executive chief on CSC's *The Railroad*.

"YOU WANT TO STAY WITH US?" ONE OFFICIAL ASKED. **"YOU WANT TO DIE WITH US?"**



Spoiled Sports

Rich players, bankrupt teams, fed-up fans. It's more than just a problem for Canadian franchises—the entire industry is suffering. BY JAMES DEACON

TROUBLE IN THE sports industry is hard to miss in Canada any more. Fans have grown accustomed to reading their sports news on the business pages after a decade of stories about cash-strapped leagues and franchises moving south. And they know, generally, the reason why: teams in Canada that play in U.S.-based leagues earn most of their money in Canadian dollars but pay their biggest bills—their payrolls—in more expensive greenbacks. They also pay for higher taxes and facility costs to run their arenas than American teams do. And former Ottawa Senators owner Rod Bryden had been complaining for so long about his inability to pay off debts that no one was surprised when his team filed for bankruptcy protection last month. Ha-ha-ha.

But there's a new problem that is threatening precisely every pro-sport team that has the good fortune to have fulfilled the industry's dream for the last 30 years is finally slowing down. Money's no longer so easy to come by, and rights fees have gone the way of so many dollars and cents, so selling or licensing successful deals is far more difficult than it ever was before. The giant Sports Marketing agency (SM) Worldwide collapsed after overextending on blue-chip sports properties such as World Cup



soccer and men's tennis in recent years. Companies are no longer willing to pay top price just to copy up to their favourite sports stars any more. They want assurances that they'll reach their target markets and get returns on their investments. "The economy has forced companies to examine every dollar they spend," says Michael Goulet, president of Toronto-based GEM Group, a sports and entertainment professional

marketing agency. "Sponsorships can help a company will more products and build their brand, but there's a limit to how much they can spend to achieve those goals. And in a lot of cases, we've reached that limit."

Fans feel the same way. Ticket prices for big-league events are so high that fewer people can afford a single game, let alone a full season. So when teams fail to stay competitive, ticket buyers find something else to do—there are plenty of low-cost entertainment alternatives out there. And increasingly, corporations are choosing "strategic philanthropy" as a way to promote their brands rather than sponsoring a golf tournament or basketball team, they can make a large donation and have their brand associated with a major arts organization or hospital. As a result, big-league sports are experiencing a major market correction after years of seemingly limitless revenue growth, and while no one expects a World-like bust, the effects will still be dramatic. Leagues could lose teams, either through bankruptcy or compression. Pro tennis and golf have already lost tournaments. Some franchise values have already declined. TV-rights fees in certain sports are falling and player salaries may

The Eagles are leaving and Ottawa is trouble. Left: The Canucks hope to break even.



THE PRO: Tiger Woods won nearly US\$7 million on the 2002 PGA Tour, \$2.6 million ahead of runner-up Phil Mickelson. Woods' endorsements reportedly paid him another US\$62 million. **THE PAIN:** At the end of last year, nine companies decided not to renew their PGA Tour multi-million-dollar title sponsorships.



THE PRO: Serena Williams, who currently holds all four women's grand slam tennis titles, took home a record US\$3.6 million from tournaments in 2002. **THE PAIN:** Dull by comparison, men's tennis is struggling to keep its audience. Many events, including the men's Canadian Open, are without sponsors.



THE PRO: Shortstop Alex Rodriguez of the Texas Rangers is the salary champ at US\$25.2 million a year for 10 years. He clubbed 57 homers and drove in 142 runs in last year. **THE PAIN:** In 2002, the Rangers finished in last place. League attendance dropped 6.1 per cent; 26 of 30 teams lost money.



THE PRO: A 12-year, US\$115-million deal makes quarterback Donovan McNabb the NFL's highest-paid player. He led Philadelphia to the NFC finals. **THE PAIN:** The NFL is still king of the sports hill, but ratings have fallen since 1996 and ABC, CBS and Fox are losing millions after overpaying for TV rights.



THE PRO: Minnesota's Kevin Garnett is the NBA's top earner at US\$25.2 million this season (that represents 42 per cent of the Timberwolves' US\$60-million player payroll). **THE PAIN:** The NBA's income from over-the-air network TV has declined, and many of the 29 teams are struggling to fill seats.



THE PRO: Five-time scoring champ Jaromir Jagr will earn US\$11 million this season with the Washington Capitals, making him the highest-paid player in the history of the NHL. **THE PAIN:** More than half of the league's 30 teams are estimated to be losing money; two teams are in bankruptcy protection.

actually have tapper out.

Pro sports aren't disappearing. They're a huge part of North American culture—in dollars spent, they comprise the biggest single segment of the entertainment industry. And some still thrive—when it was reported last week that Toronto businessman Steve Stavro might be selling his interest in hockey's Maple Leafs and the National Basketball Association's Raptors, there was a noticeable gathering of the pulse on Big Street. Stavro's share is expected to sell for \$108 million. But that's the exception. These days, leagues and teams are being forced to change the way they do business. The old model supports was to grow revenues to keep up with rising salaries, and for years it worked. Leagues and teams sold more tickets and more sponsorships. Dozens of new arenas and stadiums added additional revenue sources. And TV networks kept paying more for broadcast rights fees.

But that model no longer applies. In many instances, revenues have actually stopped growing or they've declined. Basketball,

hockey, football, the Olympics—you name it—have pretty much squeezed all they can from sponsorships, luxury boxes, Internet sites and advertising. They did the same with stadium naming rights, getting creative contracts with companies looking to enhance their brands—with occasionally disastrous results. In 1998, PSN Inc. contracted US\$125 million over 20 years to name the new football stadium in Baltimore; in 2000, Enron Corp. agreed to pay US\$190 million over 30 years to call Houston's ballpark Enron Field. Those companies died, and the demise of those multi-year deals undermined the value of naming rights throughout the industry.

TV networks appear to have hit their ceiling, too. In the 1990s channel universe, networks for many sports have declined, so networks can't charge enough for advertising to recoup the billions they've agreed to pay for broadcast rights. So NBC's deal for the current one-on-one TV rights contract with the National Basketball Association that NBC paid in the previous agreement. The

same is likely in football since industry analysts predict ABC, CBS and Fox will lose more than US\$1 billion on their current eight-year, US\$174-billion National Football League deal, in part because ratings for those games have fallen by 10 per cent since the agreements were signed in 1998.

Stray by such huge losses, TV execs on both sides of the border say they've stood up and won't spend so extravagantly the next time. In Canada, CBC has already decided not to renew its deal with the Toronto Blue Jays for 2003. And one big U.S. network, NBC, cancelled the NFL, NBA and baseball, and instead is filling programming holes without committing such as the Arena Football League. The network's NFL AFL license went head-to-head with ABC's coverage of the NFL All-Star Game on Feb. 2 and drew only in many viewers. "The lesson is that we can't go overboard on rights fees," says Nancy Lane, executive director of CBS Sports. "Where do you draw the line? At some point, it's just worth it."

Too little long for the buck was the an-

doing of the Air Canada Championship in Vancouver. It was one of 14 PGA Tour events that lost their title sponsor last season, but all the other found new sponsors. "We view that as a testament to the strength of our game," says Tom Wake, the Tour's chief marketing officer. "Golf has proven amazingly resilient." In Vancouver, however, the same decided not to renew and, despite a year of trying, organizers could not find a company to take on the annual US\$6 million commitment. The tournament never attracted the top players who in turn would attract the bigger TV audience. "The fact of the matter is that the tournament was a B event, and no one wanted to pay a dollar for it," says Michael Merrill, managing director of the sports marketing firm IMG-Canada. "It was a terribly run event, but it never drew a great field."

If there's one thing that keeps sports executives awake at night, though, it's the fear that they are getting their teams or leagues out of time's reach. Attendance is already a big issue for Major League Baseball and the NHL, and it could soon be a problem for football and hockey if teams don't put the brakes on price hikes. It isn't just tough on casual buyers. Corporate operators get hit with

another son. Recent fees—up to a one-time charge of \$35,000 per seat at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto—that compared the cost of the ticket. And if those buyers balk, that spells trouble for the NHL, which doesn't have the huge TV contract that it does with the other sports and therefore relies more heavily on gate receipts. For that reason, many hockey officials regard potential franchisees in Atlanta and Nashville as one at risk that they won't return in that form. On the other hand, the fact that arena owners are well established and where, in hockey's production, the teams are selling seats of the curious does that could help their fate.

Some sports are looking the trend. The Canadian Football League's earnings last year up and expected to increase revenues from TV and sponsorships as much. But it's partly a function of how low its revenues were to begin with. As well, pro basketball, even after losing the Vancouver Grizzlies to Memphis, is finally making money on Canadian TV. "Our pro game ratings are up," says Bill Gaudin, managing director of NBA Canada, "and the number of hours of coverage has increased by seven times" since 1985. And some teams seem immune from the downturn in sports fortunes. The New York

Yankees are going into the coming baseball season carrying a US\$164-million payroll, five times what the St. Louis Cardinals pay. Yet the Braves themselves can still turn a profit because local revenues, especially from cable TV, are strong.

That's why there's so much interest in Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, which owns the Leafs, the Raptors and the Jewish Air Canada Centre. The Raptors are having a terrible season, and the chances of the NHL's a troubled franchise ever getting out of the hole covering the Leafs in Toronto in the future, the first major franchise for the Leafs, and the Raptors, despite their on-court woes, are among the NBA leaders in several solid seasons. So there have been several offers willing to buy out Stavro. Among them, Ken Thomson, Canada's richest man and one of the richest in the world, money man, and Blue Jays owner Ted Rogers, who has lost much interest in baseball but is reportedly interested in expanding his sports portfolio.

But even the Leafs are facing the change in the sports economy. Richard Padellaro, president and chief executive officer of MLSE, says that while the team has developed some relatively small new revenue streams from digital channels and other initiatives, income growth has slowed. "We have a lot of

The old model in sports was to grow revenues to keep up with rising salaries. But in many instances, revenues have stopped growing or they've declined.

TAKING THE CANUCKS FROM BUST TO BREAK-EVEN

For many a Canadian, it took a strong stomach to see a Vancouver Canucks fan. They had those killer V sweaters with the headless-in-disguise colour scheme, proof you should never have discovered California to design hockey jerseys. But the grizzlies now cheer that. Except for a couple of high points—they made the Stanley Cup finals in 1982 (a fluke) and 1994 (an merit)—the team on the ice was mediocre to bad for most of its first 30 years, and it showed in the box office. Some seasons, the Canucks sold out not only when the Montreal Canadiens or Toronto Maple Leafs came to town, but the visitors often got the lowest cheers, it was dispiriting.

But in the old days, teams could be that bad and still make a little profit. Most clubs made the playoffs and made lucrative post-season game receipts. Player salaries were low compared to other sports, and in the '70s, the Canadian dollar could look like the Yankee greenback in the eyes. By the late 1990s, the economics had changed, and the Canucks, still low on the ice, were lower at the bank. With higher salaries to pay, a worsening competitive edge and greater

competition for the entertainment dollar, Vancouver lost as much as \$30 million a year.

The current team—like the Edmonton Oilers and Montreal Canadiens—offers a template for surviving the harsher reality of pro sports. Gump into this weekend's play, the Canucks are in first place in the division, had sold out 24 of 28 home dates, and were on budget to break even for the first time in years. Team president Brian Burke, hired by owner John McCreary of Seattle to rebuild the franchise, explains:

"We've done five things that contributed to our turnaround. Number 1 was connecting with the business community. We have our country everywhere, and don't have the contacts that a local owner would have. So we've established links through business advisory council, a think-tank of top corporate leaders, and solid sales and marketing leads.



Burke: 'we've shed the fat cat image'

"Number 2 is we've reconnected with our community. We're involved with charities, hospital visits, schools—everything. Our motto is that while our on-ice performance may vary from year to year, our commitment to the community will always be the same.

"Number 3 is we've shed the fat cat image. When I first came here, people thought we had a bunch of invisible players who didn't work very hard. We have shed that image, and I think that is important if you are going to ask people to invest in a team—which is what they do when they buy tickets or watch on television.

"Number 4, we play an entertaining style of hockey. We don't trap. We play a style designed to entertain our fans. Whether we're successful or not that particular night.

"And number 5, we've just gotten a good team. It's important to say that we put the first four things in place before we got to a good team, and people were already re-sponding before we started winning. This is a great hockey team—we might sell out the rest of the season." **JS**

time, that the Leafs will always be okay, that we'll always be okay," says Pridie. "But right now, it's like we have to run like hell just to stay in the same place."

For a decade or more, Canadian teams and sporting events have had to face the challenges of 66 cent dollars and higher building costs and taxes. In some respects, that makes them better prepared to survive the changing economic conditions of sports than their U.S. counterparts. With revenue growth slowing across the industry, the best teams will be the ones that get the most out of their budgets. And at that, Canadian teams are front-runners. They are leaner and harder-working, and they know how to swing off they can from every dollar.

They're also smart when it happens if they don't. Quebec City and Winnipeg left their hockey teams and Vancouver's Grizzlies were sold. The Montreal Expos, meanwhile, have all but packed their bags and are just waiting to learn what U.S. city will be their 2004 home. To survive, teams like the Vancouver Canucks, Edmonton Oilers and Montreal Canadiens reorganized themselves in recent seasons, and while they aren't making tons of money, they aren't losing big ones, either. If the next collective



Against the grain, the value of Toronto's Maple Leafs and Raptors continues to soar

agreement with the players keeps salaries on line with revenues, those teams might soon compete for the Stanley Cup.

That's a big "if," of course. The NHL is champing at the bit to start negotiations on a new labour deal, but the current one doesn't expire until September 2004 and

the players' association isn't in any hurry. Since 1995, when the last agreement was struck, the average NHL salary has nearly tripled to more than US\$1.6 million a season. And the union is quick to point out that neither Buffalo nor Ottawa, both with low payrolls, failed financially because of player costs. But even well-managed operations on both sides of the border complain they can't make ends meet under the current deal. Vancouver has a top-flight team, and level payroll and jam-packed arenas every night, and yet the team's budget is to break even only if it gets into the playoffs and gets the game revenues from three post-season home dates. "How can a business survive like that?" asks Canada president Brian Burke. "That doesn't give our owner a penny back on his investment, let alone a profit. I should be fired."

The Toronto Blue Jays are attempting to get more on line, cutting payroll and giving young players with potential the chance to play regularly. That saves on salary—important for a team that reported more than \$100 million in losses over the last two seasons. "We can't keep losing huge dollars," says Blue Jays president Paul Godfrey. He's trimmed the payroll for the upcoming sea-



son to about US\$15 million from US\$78 million in 2001. "We're going to manage our costs," he adds, "and our expectations."

Burke and Godfrey agree on another matter. They argue that they need some kind of government assistance to compete with U.S. teams that pay for their local and regional fans. Both have advocated that teams be should benefit from lottery sales versus preventing home games that drive the revenue from betting on sports. Among other things, Jersey lottery would help mitigate the negative impact of the low dollar, which hurts Canadian sports but not American. Godfrey said the lottery's disadvantages are: the Blue Jays \$50 million in 2002. "We've lost those years already, and it's about to go [the Expos] and another [the Senators] is on its way," he says. "How many more teams have to disappear before people realize we really are in trouble?"

Toplayers, though, have so far turned a deaf ear, and the few politicians who have expressed sympathy for sports organizations have generally been rebuffed by their

constituents. Alberta is the only province that has helped, distributing to secure the income generated by a dedicated sports lottery and a winning players tax. "I believe we have come close to making out our revenues," says Burke, "and I think we've done an excellent job of managing our costs if you look at our monthly performance and its payroll. So the next step of the team continues to improve and our payroll continues to rise—which is the way it goes when you do well in sport. If government wants to help keep this team together."

With their assistance, Burke contends, the Canucks and the teams at the same position will have to slash payroll to survive, ending popularity for cheaper but unexciting talent. And that approach can backfire and turn off fans, who have other ways to spend their discretionary income. That is, in every sport, the best marketing plan is a competitive team, and that's not easy to

achieve in sports where there's such disparity in payroll. That has been true in baseball for years, and it's increasingly the case in hockey. It's not just a baseball, but there's still a great golf—this season, the New York Yankees (US\$70 million) are spending 37½ times what the Minnesota Twins (US\$23.5 million) pay.

The players' association points to the fact that low-cost Ottawa is riding high this season while the big-budget Rangers are struggling, but the fact is, star of the last Stanley Cup champs were large-payroll teams. Sitting in the press box watching a recent Rangers game at Madison Square Garden, Bob Gentry, the five-time Stanley Cup winner with the Canadiens and now an arena hockey coach with the Dallas Stars, and the NHL and its players have to do something to level the playing field. "The competitive balance in the league can't be neglected for too much longer," Gentry said. "From here to believe their team has a chance to win. Otherwise, they'll just sit and pout." And that, in any business, is the bottom line. **BT**

Fact is, the best marketing plan is to have a competitive team, and that's not an easy thing to achieve in sports with such huge disparities in payrolls



AOL IN THE FAMILY

The disastrous marriage with Time Warner was another millennial delusion

THIS SPACE tries to address "big picture" concepts, rather than discussing the nitty-gritty of a single stock. But the sign of AOL Time Warner Inc. is such an extraordinary case of delusion and disaster at one time that it warrants a column.

The 2000 merger of America Online with Time Warner was the talk of the world—often getting an *Investment* cover story. This would be the convergence play of the millennium, fusing the leading Internet service provider with the leading media and entertainment company.

When the merger was completed in 2001, stockholders' equity was US\$157 billion, and the stock was trading in the US\$50 range. After reporting a record loss of US\$6.7 billion for 2002, the equity is down to a stated—and dubious—US\$53 billion, and the shares trade in the US\$12 range.

That loss came in a year in which the company's media division was *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and the second installment of the Harry Potter series. The stock it was associated, Ted Turner, who had built some of Time Warner's key TV divisions (including CNN, TBS Superstation and Turner Classic Movies), dropped out of top management to start his own media and publishing empire.

AOL chairman Steve Case, who bought Time Warner with what we now know was fancy money, is gone. But he sold so much optioned stock during the dizzy days that he remains one of the nation's wealthiest men. His even in good shape on the scale he still holds, when *my America Online* first appeared on Nasdaq in March 1992, the pre-offering value of the stock was US\$9 cents a share.

At the time Time became a division of AOL, the Internet operations were central and the most valuable component in the conglomerate. They were generating highly profitable service fees and they were the means of reaching 25 million people worldwide with advertising and cost-selling. That

25 million figure would, we were assured, grow exponentially.

Yes, there were the magazines, but Internet options credited Time Warner's Gerald Levin with genius for getting so much AOL stock for dull, dead assets. The company now underlines that the value of Time Warner "What happened?"

Any collapse on this scale would involve mega finger-pointing, but this one includes Hollywood and media properties, so the blame and rage are at five-star levels. Each day produces new movies, and accumulations of double crosses and barnacles. The media are the message.

A few thoughts. Although AOL is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, it is really a Nasdaq company. During the time AOL's price slumped approximately 85 percent, Nasdaq fell roughly 70 percent, so only one of the two is a stock, not a unique phenomenon.

AOL's accounting turned out to be terrible, and that means huge write-downs, but it was based on Nasdaq it wouldn't look bad by comparison. The only American Nasdaq company I followed with good success is SouthWest, a Southern bank. Why it has its own in the world of banking, finance and life is beyond me, but it is, like AOL, the most successful in its industry.

One reason there could still be value in the company is that those dull, despised assets are great cash-flow generators. In an accounting display of efficiency and conservatism, people kept making—and not just people making, but such other properties as *Sports Illustrated* and *Time*. Furthermore, they chose to allocate more of their spare time

to watching the upmarket output on Time Warner's HBO, rather than allocating all time not devoted to eating, bathing and sex to Web surfing. (Of his Web time, it seems that he has a bigger share than it enjoys in other media. Pornography seems the most reliably profitable Web business.)

America Online's location change from booming profitability to the depths of loss isn't necessarily a sign of particularly incompetent management. AOL's tradition of deal-up business has been going good to the lightning speed of broadband. That kind of competitive advantage in an everyday way in the world of tech and telecom. The next new thing keeps coming along to demolish the glittering bubble that it was being sold in the stock market at astronomical earnings multiples. Just about the only stock company that maintains its market share and profit margins is Microsoft—a monopolist. (It is noteworthy that Microsoft has squandered tens of billions of dollars of shareholder funds in trying to break the company from its dependence on Windows by getting it into other lines of business. It has failed continuously and ignorantly. The good news for stockholders is that the company is going to pay dividends. A penny paid is a penny saved.)

Ted Turner is a genius and the sign that this mega-merger was doomed to failure was the company's inability to give him a leading role. He has even got his baseball team, the Atlanta Braves, have the best record in the National League over the last dozen years. Expect Ted to try to pry some TV revenue assets out of the leadership. The story he's peddling is that he's going to devote his time to philanthropy and lions, but that's as credible as those reports of politicians and CEOs who resign in order to spend time with their families.

Some value-oriented investors (including me) now own AOL stock. They think the piece of this empire is worth more than the market assigns to the whole.

AOL must be trading, and if by foolish people who believe those absurd forecasts about the New Line. They are betting on Who will take their place? I suspect AOL will soon be owned largely by people who don't believe the mainstream hype. Dull will be good.

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Afraid to Take a Stand

Jean Chrétien's gutless foreign policy lacks both courage and morality

"WELL, IRAQ WAS THE BIG STORY," Peter Mandaville said in opening *The National* weekly, changing its Ottawa correspondent Eric Sorenson. Agreeing, Sorenson noted, "Will this country support a U.S.-led war in Iraq, even if the UN Security Council does not?" Peter tried to master himself, but his heart wasn't in it. January was ending and February loomed and the answer wouldn't amount to a hill of beans.

"This government has not been clear on that point," Opposition Leader Stephen Harper said loudly. Added NDPER Bill Blaikie: "The Prime Minister owns the Canadian people (clear answer), qualifying it with a modest 'I assume to me'."

Not even Ordinary Canadians (underlined) "I thought we were mostly peacekeepers. But they aren't wanting to go to war," said Underlined Number 1. "The U.S. is our best and biggest ally," said Underlined Number 2, thus offering the CBC's mandate to give all sides of the story without letting any intelligence slip through. Minister of National Defence John McCallum talked about "prudent planning," but assured Canadians that such good housekeeping "doesn't reflect any commitment."

Three days later, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien gave us the definitive Canadian position on the war question—and every other possible question in a "I find it a bit hard to picture yourself" he said the Canadian Press. So far, so good. U.S. policies have figured out a way to use Canada off and fast as we go—though they would likely do so. In this sense, Mr. Chrétien's "position" is perfectly logical, if lacking courage and morality. Mind you, minutes before we came in to deal—Canada will probably join a France. Even as President Jacques Chirac was saying "no" to war without a new UN resolution, the aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* had left Tunis steaming eastward.

The U.S. has been exploring the need for military action in Iraq since Sept. 11, when President George W. Bush declared that "America would not distinguish between

terrorists and those nations that harbor terrorists." It has repeated the ABCs of its case. Iraq's refusal to comply with 16 UN resolutions demanding it disarm, disclosures from Khader Hamza, the scientist who headed Iraq's nuclear program, Iraq's past use of chemical weapons and aggressive actions in the region, Saddam Hussein's personal stockpiling of suicide bombers along with his blood-curdling threats. But America is unlikely to persuade people who will shoot with sides over their heads rather than how facts that would outlast their claim. When the situation in Iraq is resolved, Washington will have time to take stock of its record of alliances.

Canada is a member of NATO, a defence alliance built on the premise that an attack on one is an attack on all. Having members of an alliance choose which action they feel the supporting nation is most sense as an army where the soldiers are so much better they will attack. Waiting for Iraq to further develop biological and nuclear weapons so that first Iraq (which was the target of Saddam's raids in the Gulf War) and then America and Europe can be blacklisted is simply not a viable option for a decent world.

Unlike Canada, Europe has at least a historical cause for its cowardly position. It has the enemy in its midst. Britain and France are about dismantling the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century. There was no independent Iraq then, no Syria, Jordan or Lebanon. The colonial masters in London and Paris made all sorts of promises—both emotional and practical—so the Arabs could stand against the Turks and protect their countries to serve their own imperial interests.

Unlike Canada, Europe has at least a historical excuse for its cowardly position. It has the enemy in its midst.

lithians. Ascent of Lawrence of Arabia from rally in still found in British bourgeoisie and policy makers. This offers inspiration policy and law enforcement with the result that some of the most radical Islamic mosques have flourished in the U.K.

In the 1950s, France tried to keep its empire going during the dynasties of Algeria. The outcome was a result was not that Algeria remained loyal to France, but that Algeria remained loyal to France. Now, both France and Britain are vulnerable to an unstable last century of continuing under a number of people who are not just a troubling electoral factor but are actually ready to make trouble—as recent cases of alleged terrorists in both countries make clear.

Empire divided Germany, but its post-Second World War prosperity concentrated in "good" countries—who came largely from Muslim Turkey. Germany has another factor in its dilemma: resistance to U.S. military action. The West successfully militarily in Germany such public opinion as reflection that it has acquired a non-reflexive psychology. Add this to the necessity of small powers to traditionally seek accommodation rather than force to solve problems and one can see why Germany and France think they can make a separate peace with the terrorists.

NATO was created to counter a real threat, as well as chronic, from an expert American Soviet expert. NATO did that through the might of the U.S. defence establishment. With the collapse of the U.S.S.R., most of NATO's mission is now vanished. One could argue that the 1999 action in Kosovo was no serious intent a search for a new purpose for NATO, and the Iraq problem has exposed just how hollow that search was.

The answer for America will be not to make all kinds of NATO but in some association of powers that generally hold common values and will actively play a role in supporting them—rather than going far from the side like Canada—and in flexible alliances to respond to changing situations. Russia will be an important ally in the fight against terrorism. The future for Canada, if it is a good footnote in history pointing out that Canada tried to have their cake and eat it and ended up with a spicy face from scolding too much lying.

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'CONFLICT IS CLEARLY POSSIBLE'

The UN's special envoy to North Korea talks about the breakdown of trust

MAURICE STRONG likes to say he never had a career. Rather, he says, he is "task oriented," moving from one business project or international event to another. When he was in his 30s, he emceed and ran all one parties in Calgary; at 35, he took the helm of PowerCorp, the financial conglomerate controlled by Quebec's Desmarres family. Strong has also been involved with the United Nations throughout his career, eventually becoming secretary general of the UN conference on the environment. He was a strong advocate in setting up the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where 172 countries endorsed the principles of sustainable development and set the stage for the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. In January 2006, now 73 and a special adviser to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, was sent to North Korea to discuss how to head off a looming food shortage that could affect a third of the country's 23-million-strong population. Instead, the leaders in Pyongyang wanted to talk nothing about nuclear weapons and the standoff with the United States over North Korea's threat to build an atomic arsenal. Strong discussed the experience with *Wired* Editor **Tina Fennell**.

What did you see after you got off the plane in Pyongyang?

I was struck by the little houses, small buildings, schools—yes, the normal kinds you see in Canada on a bright, crisp winter's day. But there were no signs of smoke coming out of the chimneys—virtually none. And people were walking everywhere in the cold, which indicates they simply don't have any fuel. The place is in desperate shape. Unless urgent action is taken by the beginning of April, there will be very little food left. It could be a major tragedy.

From the North Korean point of view, what has triggered the standoff with the United States?

In 1994, the U.S. agreed to build two light water reactors, which cannot easily be used to make weapons-grade plutonium. In ex-

change, the North Koreans dropped their nuclear program. But the Americans never built the reactors. It's the breach of that agreement that the North Koreans say has created the crisis. So the Koreans are saying the agreement was with the Americans and we need to deal with the Americans. But there's been a regime change in the U.S., and the new regime doesn't have the same degree of commitment to that agreement.

What message did you deliver to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell?

The North Koreans are saying they have no intention of developing nuclear weapons and are prepared as part of the settlement to subject themselves to verification and inspection procedures. That's the main thing the Americans are after. On the U.S. side, President Bush has said they have no intention of attacking North Korea. In fact, as part of a settlement they are prepared to receive aid and possibly expansion of their economic assistance. So you have the phenomenon that both sides are more or less saying what the other wants, but they're saying it past each other instead of to each other. The problem is the lack of trust, and the fact that each side is suspicious of the signals that the other is sending.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair recently said that after Saddam Hussein is removed, Washington and London will turn their sights on North Korea. But the North Koreans seem to be much stronger strategically than Iraq.

It's quite different from Iraq, because the North Koreans have one of the largest conventional military forces in the world—a million people and arm—and they've got nuclear and missile technology. Any war they fight will be in an area where their conventional weapons could be used. So their concerns need to be taken seriously.

What are the chances of a war?

We could slip into conflict if the rhetoric isn't de-escalated, and if each party contin-

ues to demand the signals of the other. The Koreans also say that if the UN Security Council were to impose sanctions, they would consider that a declaration of war. The irony is that the elements for a peaceful settlement are there, but there is such a breakdown of trust and communication that conflict is clearly possible.

You've said North Korea wants to modernize its economy. But can an administration as economic as this one ever change?

There's an interesting example illustrating that you don't have to have regime change to have significant change in the manner in which the economy is run. The Koreans need to open up. They're prepared to, but at their own speed. They want change with our regime change.

Will the UN's credibility be hurt by the Iraq situation?

It is perceived as being used by the U.S. and Britain as an instrument of war globally, that will hurt the UN. On the other hand, if the UN does not agree to sanction the domestic of a regime that's as bad as Saddam Hussein's, then it also could be weakened. But the UN is strengthened by the fact that it is the place where these things have to be worked out.

You were key in creating the 1992 Earth Summit and later, the Earth Charter. How is that developing?

Mikhail Gorbachev and I got a group together after Rio and we've been working on the Earth Charter. Millions of people around the world have embraced it. The charter is a statement of moral and ethical principles designed to guide the conduct of people toward each other and toward the earth. We have to be governed more by ethical and moral principles and much less by the search for material wealth. Remember, some of the most creative periods in history have been those in which business interests have been secondary. Greece and Rome, for example,



where literature, the arts and culture were prominent.

The Kyoto Protocol also came out of Rio. Although Ottawa has ratified it, the terms are still hotly debated in Canada.

The targets themselves may seem hard to reach, but they're still quite modest. They're hard to reach if we're not prepared to make significant changes in the way we use energy and in the kind of money we use. That we're going to have to make a transition, and Kyoto will eventually drive it. We're trying to make an adjustment without really sig-

nificantly changing anything, but it's not deniable. All major nations movements are resisted and controversial.

Canada's approach has been hesitant at best. The U.S., which opted out of Kyoto, still has a lot of clout because it's such a big country. Canada couldn't do that because it would have meant being a great deal of financial accommodation. Canada's demerit in the world has come about because of our contributions to globalization. After the Second World War, Canada was invited into the club of great nations. We're

still there, even though economically we wouldn't be considered. That we will pay and that status since we step out of multilateral agreements.

What message would you send to your former colleagues in the oil industry in Calgary who continue to fight Kyoto?

When the three made going to be abolished, the business vision of the period said, well, it may be OK mainly, but it's going to run business. It was the same when they tried to abolish child labour. These things were not discussed for business. [E]



MY BABY REWARDS

Delivering new life sometimes costs me more than my fee, but there's a payoff

STILL in my divorce-battered jeans, I enter the early morning glare of our kitchen and find my husband reading the *NY Times* with his head tilted at where I recovered home a few hours ago after attending a midlife-of-the-right sort. He sees my stained hair and smeared smudges and it gives me a moment's reprieve while he squeezes my shoulder and adds an extra scoop of coffee to the pot. His is a gentle man and he begins softly, "Busy night?" It's a statement as much as a question. He is, was, unalarmed by the phone calls that preceded our 30-day separation.

It's no secret that, contrary to the usual stereotype about doctors, I have the financial savvy of a guru; my husband is by default the family brain-counter. But even I know what's coming: "This baby delivering his or her own is getting pretty cozy," he tells me as he looks across at the nurse.

Hurriedly leaving the house, I'd chosen to drive my husband's seductively frost-free vehicle, which was parked in the garage, rather than chip at the ice-encrusted windshield of my own in the driveway. But backing out as I wiped sleep from my eyes, I crumpled the passenger's side mirror on the garage door frame. Leaving the hospital at 5:45 after the birth, I pulled the maternity nurse on whether I should wake my husband to let her know about the delivery.

"Absolutely not," I was advised. "News like that should never be delivered in person. Leave him a note."

What he's telling me now as he pours my coffee is that the fee I will receive for the delivery will not cover the cost of replacing his car engine.

Undoubtedly, the privilege of delivering babies comes with a hefty price tag. Sadly, Western world expectations that all pregnant women must have a perfect outcome means that what I pay annually for malpractice is sure to cost someone a Third World family. In many ways, I am fortunate enough to be a well-paid cheerleader while the women on the birthing bed delivers her own baby. But there are the differences—the ones

pected breech deliveries, the abruptions, in which the safety of the mother and baby are threatened by a premature separation of the life-sustaining placenta from the wall of the uterus, and the extremely premature births. These have cost me a great deal in hair-raising services to more and more grey surfaces. And as my own child-friendly bladder approaches unrequited I expect that the cost of Depend will soon be added to the fiscal cult of sustaining myself through the roll-back deliveries.

To my way of thinking, though, just as the costs of shopping pay dividends in the form of Air Miles, my choice to continue to deliver babies in an era when most family physicians have abandoned this service has also reaped vast rewards: I have been a predicted collector of Birling Road Air Miles since 1992.

From the first, innocent consultations through to the final pushing manoeuvre, this is an honour like no other. After assisting a woman with the delivery of her child, I feel much like I assume someone would who has successfully talked a person down off



roof. I still delight in the otherworldly first glimpse of glowering scalp, in the newborn's lusty first cry and in the blissful look on the mother's face as her child is placed on her abdomen and she instantly forgets she was ever on that roof.

Occasionally, some of the rewards are tangible, like the freshly cut Christmas tree my family received a few years ago from the proprietor of a local lot whose wife had delivered their first child on a snowy night the preceding August, or the crinkling Celophane-wrapped grocery store bouquets, or the 135-leaf-long pumpkin that appeared in our driveway last year a few weeks before Halloween.

As I tick up mileage, though, I mourn the days of my early career when a woman and her partner delivered their child in the privacy of the birthing room, massaged only by the medical and nursing staff. Birthing babies, it seems, has become a spectator sport. Now, mothers-to-be, like sisters, supportive friends, and even brothers, fathers and young children are commonly in attendance in the delivery room as women birthing preferences have shifted. When the conversation in the room is exclusively wadded from the needs of the birthing woman to the menu in the hospital cafeteria or the latest video, we old-timers have learned to bite our lips as we try to reduce the song of spectators in the needs of the woman we're paying for.

Last night, though, there were only the four of us—the labouring mother, her partner, the nurse, and myself. Labour progressed so rapidly to secure the infant that my partner had hoped for and meant the baby a healthy girl with a shock of red hair, who in her arms. After the birth, there was a tidy procession of well-wishers who had gathered in the blessed waiting-room at the far end of what must have seemed an eternal hallway. The last to enter; the new arrival was the woman's father, who tentatively approached the side of the bed where his daughter was cradling his first grandchild in her tired arms. As he passed the tiny bundle to him I looked up from my perch in the corner where I was consolidating the last of my paperwork.

"Now, I have lived," were his barely audible words. And with countless moments like this collected over the past 15 years, I realize that so, too, have I. 

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Music | BY SHANDA DEZEL



SONGS FROM THE FARM

A Canadian songwriter is alt-country's new "It" girl

KATHLEEN EDWARDS had a serious classical musical upbringing, of the sort suitable for the daughter of a senior Canadian diplomat. She played violin from age 5 to 17, studied with National Arts Centre Orchestra violist Karelly Solari and was part of the Ottawa Youth Orchestra. But as a transposer in her high school band, Edwards was inclined to let her hair down. "I was the pickiest in the back playing *La Bamba*," she says. And all classical parents fell by the wayside once she discovered the guitar during some *Ramblays* (preseason in Temagami, Ont.). "I was always embarrassed," says Edwards, "to tell people I started singing and playing guitar at summer camp. But that's how it happened." Rooted no more and eight years past corny singalongs, the 24-year-old Ottawa native is now alt-country's latest "It" girl, thanks to her critically adored debut album *Fidler*. Edwards independently recorded and released the CD about a year before it was picked up last September by Canadian label MusicMaster Recordings and Rounder Records in the U.S. It was Rounder's aggressive marketing that got Fidler into "the hands of the right people," says Edwards. Soon *Fidler* was on *America's Music* and critics from major American newspapers were gabbing. Last month she performed on *Late Show* with David Letterman and *Late Call* with Carson Daly—and only then did she start to get substantial press back home. She's just a little blasé. "If you are a Canadian singer-songwriter," she says, "when you tour Canada it's like you're still considered a local act. But as soon as you Americanize, even someone who's very grassroots and not huge, it's a bigger deal.

Edwards's album introduces an intoxicating intimate voice and a heart unburdened

There are so many good songwriters in Canada but we all have to travel south to gain that critical acclaim." But Edwards isn't holding any grudges, not with both sides of the border now paying attention. She's currently opening for Blue Rodeo in Ontario, has a headlining U.S. club tour starting next week, and will perform on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno Feb. 17.

After a few years fooling around with her older brother's guitar at camp, Edwards got her own for Christmas when she was 15. She taught herself to play songs by Neil Young, Bob Dylan and Creedence Clearwater Revival—the staples of her brother's record collection. "Then I started listening to Ani DiFranco," she says, "and emulated her style of playing guitar. I figured out how to detune stuff and really fingerpick." Her first attempts at songwriting were in the DiFranco and Indigo Girls vein of '90s folk. But when she grew tired of imitating others, Edwards went looking for her own style. "Turn out she's more rough and twangy and less hippie than the Lullaby Fair stylings of her youth. She's currently being compared with the cool kids of alt-country, like Ryan Adams and Kasey Chambers, and has scored comparisons to Lucinda Williams, the grande dame of American roots rock.

Fidler is pretty unimpeachable for anyone who finds that the mixings of singer-songwriters go down better with traditional country-style instrumentation. Edwards wrote all the songs acoustically and avoided some Ottawa-area musicians—including Jim Bryson on electric guitar and banjo, Fred Gagnon on slide and lap steel, and Tim Thompson on pedal steel—to help her create the sound she wanted. "I didn't have the first clue about how to play the pedal steel," says Edwards. "But I knew I really wanted to use it."

Fidler also introduced an intoxicating narrative voice, whose tales of drinking, police standoffs and fooling around with older men suggest a woman with experience beyond Edwards' years. But upon closer inspection, her lyrics reveal a playful innocence and a heart unburdened. This is a girl who's had some fun (you are like a girl who won't sober up), some heartbreak (I'm not asleep, I can take a drink/Give you 48 hours and then I split), and has toyed with bad living (Going down to the some

old her and I don't even order any more).

Edwards lived in Switzerland and Scandinavia as a child before finishing high school in Ottawa. (Her father, Leonard, was an ambassador and is currently deputy minister for international trade.) After playing with the notion of going into Native law or English literature, Edwards says, "I just decided I didn't need to pay tuition to go to school. I can travel and learn languages and religions and enjoy literature without having to take a course on enjoying literature. Of course my dad says, 'That's a really closed-minded way of thinking about it.'"

Edwards got a place of her own in the capital city and a job as a waitress. In 1999, she made a seven-song EP and then set up her own Western Canada tour by cold-calling music stores in cities she'd never been to and asking where someone like her, a folkie singer-songwriter, could get a gig. She scheduled 10 shows in six weeks and travelled by herself in her '88 Chevy Suburban. "It didn't make enough money at the time to show to afford a hotel on the way to the next, I'd sleep in the back of the truck as a Tim Hortons. There was one 24 hours, so I fell head of sleep."

When she got back to Ottawa, Edwards says she slipped into an early 20s slacker lifestyle of "going out every night, having a day job, being hungover every day for the day job, then going out again." She says that when she decided she didn't want to go to university, she didn't plan on wasting her life, going out to a bar every night. So at 22 she moved into a farmhouse in Whitefield, Que., 40 minutes outside of Ottawa. "I really wanted to be on my own," she says. "Suddenly I had no distractions and had all this time and quiet on my hands." She wrote the songs for *Faith* in two months.

This kind of real magic also worked well for Canadian Sarah Harmer, who drew the same sort of cross-border acclaim in 2001. She wrote the songs for her major-label debut, *Now Here*, after a farmhouse near Kingston, Ont. The two artists share the same management, U.S. label and label-buck style. And like Harmer, who's quietly re-emerged to the firm this past year, Edwards plans on leading right back to the boozies when all the fuss over *Faith* has died down. "I need a place right now that I'll like to stay eventually," she says wistfully. "My night hours are deep forests and backdrops. It feels like home."



GENIES, GODS AND LSD

Peter Mettler's dreamlike documentary travels the world in search of rapture



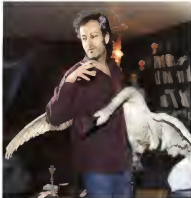
CRUALLY, it could be described as a show that no one watches about movies that no one sees. There is something inescapably poignant about the Genies, which try to reference Canadian cinema and only seem to reinforce its obscurity. Last year, they studied the triumph of *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* in one category. But this year's 22nd annual Genie Awards (CBC, Feb. 13, 8 p.m.) are already a travesty. The most critically acclaimed Canadian feature, David Cronenberg's *Spider* (opening later this month), will not win best picture, or a single acting award, because it occurred no nominations in those categories. Quebec's best movie, *La barbe du diable* (Cham and Doree) was snubbed across the board. And among the top 10 Canadian films of 2002 voted by a Toronto International Film Festival jury, only Aaron Egoff's *Amert* is up for best picture. Most admired for its ambition than its execution, Amert leads the Genies with nine nominations. Next is *Savage Menak*, with seven—a movie made for TV.

But one picture that does deserve to win a Genie this week is Mettler's *Gembling, Gods and LSD*, an experimental tour de force that's nominated for best documen-

A scene from *Gembling, Gods and LSD*, a three-hour inquiry into transcendence

tary. Unlike some Canadian films that gope for an audience and fail, this movie is so boldly unorthodox it's made their way over a theatrical distribution at all. (This month it plays in houses in Toronto, and will hit Vancouver, Ottawa, Winnipeg and the East Coast.) *Gembling, Gods and LSD* is a slow-paced, three-hour inquiry into transcendence. Soundlessly, it shows Bush playbacks in meditation in the flesh, and it's hilariously trippy. You don't need a tie to reach an ink into it. The images wash over you with the real-time rhythm of flowing water. It's as if Mettler has gone fly-fishing in the stream of consciousness, and been pulled under.

The film unfolds as a cross-cultural odyssey, both a delicious search for rapture, and a despondent portrait of those longing for it. Thru-out our wooziness with the on the floor of an evangelist church on Toronto's airport strip, accompanied with the drumming of a conga hotel in Las Vegas, as if at a space launch, a religious leaves a descriptive trail across the Nevada desert, we visit a shrine



in Arizona, a possible race in Zurich, the current axis Pines in Alpine river to fountain-dance at a Swiss one, first dance wheel across hush in India. There are interviews with gurus, gamblers, bohemians, brothel men—and Albert Hoffman, the inventor of LSD, who's 99 and still cogent.

Sitting in the office job of his house in Toronto, making a *Gembling, Gods and LSD* is a slow-paced, three-hour inquiry into transcendence. Soundlessly, it shows Bush playbacks in meditation in the flesh, and it's hilariously trippy. You don't need a tie to reach an ink into it. The images wash over you with the real-time rhythm of flowing water. It's as if Mettler has gone fly-fishing in the stream of consciousness, and been pulled under.

The Toronto-born son of Swiss immigrants, the 44-year-old filmmaker now divides his time between his hometown and Switzerland, where he lives with other artists in an abandoned hotel on a mountaintop overlooking the lake. Mettler was in the forefront of the '80s new wave of Canadian directors, a Toronto group that included Egoyan, Patricia Rozema and Bruce Mc

Mettler divides his life between Toronto and an abandoned hotel on a Swiss mountaintop

Donald. And he was the first among them to make a feature, launching his career at the age of 26 with *Scenes*, an experimental collage of sounds and images that drew critical raves. Mettler then served as executive producer for Egoyan's *Dead Man*, *Next of Kin*. Since then, while his friends have flirted with more commercial movies, he's clung consistently to the avant garde, with work ranging from *Tectonic Plates* (1992), an adaptation of a play by Robert Lepage, to *Paradox of Light* (1994), a documentary quest to photograph the aurora borealis.

Ten years in the making, *Gembling, Gods and LSD* abridges a quest of a different colour. Shooting alone or with a small crew,

between 1997 and 1999 Mettler contacted an impressive "journey of discovery" spanning four countries. Then, sifting through miles of film and video footage in a Swiss farmhouse, he assembled a 55-hour first cut. There were no second takes or multiple camera angles, just a profusion of images, characters and scenes. By the time Mettler had pared it down to three hours, he'd left an untold number of alternate scenes on the cutting room floor. *Gembling, Gods and LSD* is a \$1.5-million Canadian-Swiss co-production, with most of the shooting done in Switzerland. Mettler was contracted to deliver a one-hour cut. But after his Swiss investors saw his version, they agreed to three-hour running time, even though that would make the film difficult to distribute.

As a total immersion in altered states, the film demands a sense of open-mindedness. Editing picture and sound simultaneously (an unusual approach), Mettler designed it as "an audio-visual companion," in which music, soundscapes and images even together. Water serves as the narrative thread, and the entire movie seems to move with a mind of its own, a driving but soulful currents of clarity in random trajectories—in jet contrails, Alpine fog, or raindrops merging on a windshield in the desert.

In effect, Mettler explores what it is to watch a movie, to look for meaning in an image. "Cinema is a transcendental experience," he says. "That's part of what attracts me to cinema—going into that boundless going off on a fantastic journey. Film has the potential of all the senses combined within it, but it's made into many sensations." Mettler is keen on adapting film to show these forms. In Toronto recently, he drew hundreds to a special showing of *Gembling, Gods and LSD* at an all-night rave, which ended with yoga and rain. In Switzerland, he presented 12 min of images from the film, asking live from five playback machines while a musician mixed the soundtrack.

In search of the Great Canadian Movie, we keep hoping the gods of cinema will give us our very own. Big Red Greek Something, a popular chatter box would take the world by storm. And early year the Genies confirm the industry's failure to achieve transcendence. But visionary artists such as Norman McLaren, Michael Snow—and Peter Mettler—seem as if their cinema can still be a revolutionary art, and that Canadian often feel most at home on its cutting edge. ■

The images just wash over you—as if the director has gone fly-fishing in the stream of consciousness, and been pulled under



BOOKS | 46

Portraits of a nation
 Vladimir's work
 Helweg spent 36
 years photographing
 Russians at all
 levels of society.



BOOKS | 47

The long, long history of our flag
 The great debate of 2004, as Rick Archibald's
 I stand for Canada tells, was the calami-
 ties of Quebec's latter unifying over a
 distinctly Canadian emblem—a flag that
 went on long after the maple leaf had
 become the nation's pre-eminent symbol.



Business | Sowing the seeds of self-sufficiency

In throughout, a woman trying to raise livestock, grow rice, run a food stall or sell pottery is faced with the seemingly insurmountable task of finding capital to start her own business. But a mere \$100 can help someone in a developing country turn her skills into a sustainable, viable income. This is where Genes of Hope, a tiny Toronto-based charity, comes in. Founded in 1982 by the late cartoonist Ben Wilson and his wife Doreen (who is now executive director of UCan, a Toronto-based charitable organization which promotes literacy), Genes offers small business loans and additional support. "The thing that sets Genes apart is our focus on women," says Betha Lam, director of international programs. "You can't really have the world develop

Genes of Hope helped Maria Iskenda (above) of Brazil open a small bakery

when you ignore half the population."

The charity partners with local agencies in countries such as India, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil and Vietnam. "The basic analogy for Genes is the image of a woman sitting on a three-legged stool," says Lam. The "three legs" that Genes helps provide are micro-credit (small loans not exceeding \$100 that are repaid with interest), health-care services and education, and gender awareness training for the community. For example, Genes has set up classes where men discuss and question the practice of dowries. "It's not a case of, 'Oh, we are the rich helping you, the poor,'" says Lam. "It's more like partnership. And it's building the capacity of local agencies so they can, in turn, help their communities become self-sustaining." For Lam, who's been with the charity for three years, that's what makes that Genes so valuable.

AMY CAMERON

Listings | Fests of fun

Corner Brook Winter Carnival, Feb. 25-March 2
 This Atlantic Canada winter festival features 50 events at Memorial Mountain, including fireworks, art exhibits and even a beard-growing contest.
 Corner Brook, Nfld.

So Festival du Théâtre, Feb. 24-25
 Western Canada's largest winter festival has a fascinating theme: Last Post. Celebrate the centennial of World War I and celebrate the spirit of war with 12th-century tapestries, Winnipeg.

Tolson Township RevereFest, Feb. 27-March 2
 Four days of pre-war activities, shows and banquets, tolerable drag races, a flea market, wine, golfing, ice skating and an event where participants recreate a midnight 40°C dash from a cable to an outdoor, Milwaukee.

Hot Lights Festival, Feb. 23-March 2
 A combination of food and wine and performing arts events, including comedy, a new work by the Los Angeles-based dance company and a concert featuring the entire Montreal family of jazz musicians. Montreal.



People | From Maggie Muggins to Massimo

Taking on the role of a long-suffering, loud and overbearing Italian matriarch was female territory for Mary Long. The 51-year-old actress, currently playing Maria in *Maschio* at Toronto's Elgin Theatre, says:

"I didn't have to dig too deeply," she says, laughing. "It's in my bones." Long's parents—like those in the play—are first-generation Canadians, who immigrated from Italy in 1949. "The people grew up with were as bold and brassy as the people in the play."

Maschio, written by Massimo Giallardo and produced by Mithras Productions, is a hilarious comedy about a young Italian man who comes out of the closet to his very traditional, literally Italian

staged in French, the play's English version premiered at Montreal in September 2001 and was a huge success. (The Montreal cast is starring in the Toronto run.)

Long started acting when she was only eight, as the title character in CBC TV's *Maggie Muggins*. As an adult she's done TV, stage and voice work—including the role of Molly in the popular *Sister Moon* children's television series. Her true passion, however, is the theatre, and she becomes the fact that many Canadians don't think of going all that often. "Maybe live theatre has a bad reputation," she says. "Maybe people have gone and been bored. But when it's good, there's nothing like being transported."

AMY CAMERON

Diversions | Oscar Burtonson

Here's what the *Midnight* says. On, based just learned that: *Midnight* is a new play by Ben Green and Russell Malone. "I love the introduction of Ben Green and Russell Malone to the world of theatre. They are a great team. I love the introduction of Ben Green and Russell Malone to the world of theatre. They are a great team. I love the introduction of Ben Green and Russell Malone to the world of theatre. They are a great team."



DVDs | Wedding in a Town

Rating: Three Stars, The Williams Story (available)

Much has been written about tennis champions Serena and Venus Williams and their coach, coach/father, Richard. But this DVD offers fascinating, exclusive interviews in which father and daughter talk about their respective childhoods, training and more. Plus, there's tips for your game.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding (Feb. 11)

This cheaper hit of 2002 is just as fun for the second time around. But the DVD is absolutely lacking in extras. And while the audio commentary with screenwriter and actress Nia Vardalos, actor John Corbett and director Joel Zizka provides interesting info about Vardalos's Greek heritage, it reveals how behind the scenes scenes.

Master of the Ball, Armines Peres, Don's Reynolds, 10" (Feb. 11)

With the release of these four films, Lions Gate Films unveils their DVD signature series—with classy packaging. There are only a handful of new special features, consisting mostly of commentaries. But the choice to give presidential treatment to these four atmospheric dramas is commendable.

Six Feet Under (available)

The cinematic qualities of this brilliant HBO series are even more emphasized on DVD. While the old interviews and "revision of the opening titles" features are rather dull, the commentary by creator *Six Feet Under* is delightful.

Other notable February releases:

Postmen, starring Ewan McGregor, The Four Rooms, starring Brad Pitt, and the Best picture of the dark Twin Angel.

REVIEWS BY AMY CAMERON AND SHARON DEZEL



Books | Post-Soviet Images

No one will ever accuse Memorial photographer Heidi Hollinger of being shy. In 1998, the controversial Cuban president, Fidel Castro, in a newspaper picture had taken of them a few years earlier. "I'm never afraid to break protocol," she says. Mikhail Gorbachev is another case in point. Arriving for a 1999 show of the former president, Hollinger offered him his coffee. Gorbachev reacted by giving her a big hug. "Every time I saw him after that," says Hollinger, "he'd ask, 'Inch, where are your Hollingers?'" Gorbachev even wrote the forward to her latest book, *The Russian Empire, a collection of portraits, with text*

by Jonathan Sanders. Hollinger mortared subjects while blindingly juggling through the streets of Moscow. But for the cover itself, Hollinger, a single mother, chose her own son Luka, who is half Russian and was two months old at the time of the shoot.

Hollinger went to Russia in 1991, 11 months before the fall of Communism, to study language for a year. She ended up staying for 10 (returning to Montreal in 2004 with Luka, who's now two years old). "I lost the way they live and socialize," she explains. "At dinner they will propose toasts and stand up and tell each other what they think. I find how emotional it all was."

For the coffee-table book, Hollinger captured traditional images, like a bathhouse

Heater, a darky chair (page left), Lenin, passport controller (above) Alex, house painter

patron and a man selling wooden dolls called *matrioshka*. But she also included photos of punks, fashion designers—even one of Stalin's great-grandson, grabbing his crutch. And then there's the politician. Coming off his fall to power became an obsession for Hollinger—"like relieving business needs."

After every passat, she even got President Vladimir Putin to sit further in 1999. Once Hollinger finished photographing the ex-SG's man, he named the lesson her. According to Hollinger, Putin studied the camera intensely. "He says," she says, "he took an excellent shot."

HELEN RUTTY

Books | What could have stood on guard for Canada

Most Canadians have heard of the tumultuous political battle that raged for almost a year before the new Maple Leaf flag was first raised on Feb. 15, 1965. But Rick Archibald's *I Stood For Canada* (McGraw-Hill) and Ross does a superb job of summing up the whole story that includes the long history of the search for a distinctive flag, which dates back to 1820, and the 19th-century endorsement of the maple leaf as the permanent national symbol. So it's no surprise that among the dozens of designs Canadianers enthusiastically proposed over the years—including beavers, owls and 400-style pop-art maple leaves, it was the one that predominated. And as Canadians as the typical result is the fact Ottawa has lost track of the original prototypes. The flag that Heritage Minister Sheila Copps proudly told a media conference in 1975, 2000, was the first to be flown on Parliament Hill was later determined to be just one of a long production run. Copps' department, Archibald points out, would "welcome any information about the first head-on maple leaf flag."

BESTSELLERS

Fiction

	PREVIOUS LAST WEEK
1. <i>UNDERSTANDING OF TALENTS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	1
2. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	2
3. <i>THE MOUNTAIN</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	3
4. <i>THE MOUNTAIN OF THE MOUNTAIN</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	4
5. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	5
6. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	6
7. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	7
8. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	8
9. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	9
10. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	10

Non-fiction

1. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	1
2. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	2
3. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	3
4. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	4
5. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	5
6. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	6
7. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	7
8. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	8
9. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	9
10. <i>THE LAST DAYS OF THE LAST DAYS</i> Michael Ondaatje (A)	10

Compiled by Helen Rutty

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